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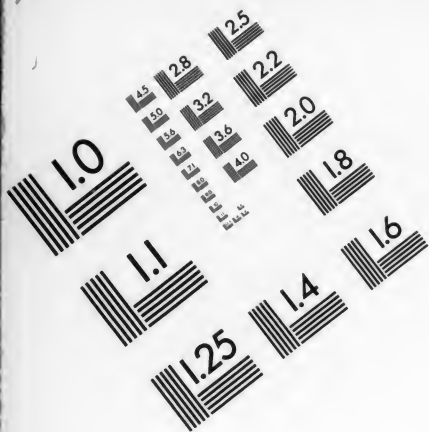
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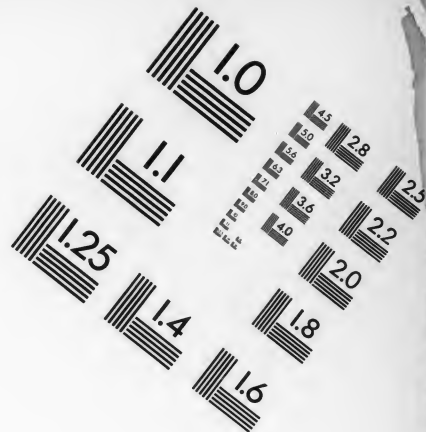
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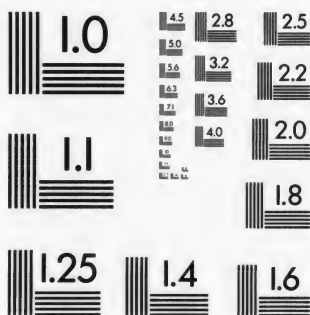
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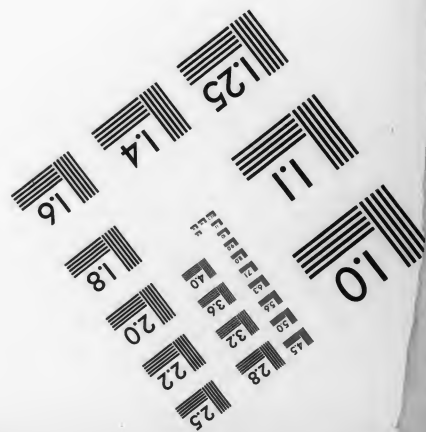
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EXPOSITORY LECTURES

ON THE

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

BY

GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
SHELDON AND COMPANY.

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1864.

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DEDICATED
TO THE
REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH OF AMERICA,

THE CHURCH OF THE AUTHOR'S ADOPTION AND LOVE,
TO WHICH THE THIRTY-SIX YEARS OF HIS MINISTRY WERE DEVOTED,
IN THE LENGTHENING OF ITS CORDS AND THE
STRENGTHENING OF ITS STAKES.

In this Church,
MAY HIS WORDS STILL WIN SOULS TO CHRIST,
IS THE PRAYER OF HIS SORROWING
WIDOW.

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SEP 29 1897 Dr Henry Driscoll 248

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PREFACE.

IN this work the public are presented with the best literary monument of its illustrious author. The subjects are the highest within the range of theological science ; and Dr. Bethune brought to their discussion the ripeness of his intellectual powers, a classic beauty of style, and the riches of a library well stored in this particular department. In view of this exposition, he had collected the principal commentators on the Heidelberg Catechism. As the lectures were prepared for popular audiences, they are free from the stiffness of theological formulas, and will prove interesting to all classes of readers. While this Catechism has been so widely received, and has become the standard of faith in two large churches of our country, — while it has engaged the attention of so many commentators in Europe, — it seems singular that this should be the first American attempt at a popular exposition designed for the press.

It is a misfortune to the church that the work remains incomplete. It has been carried forward with careful regard to the catechetical text to the Thirty-fifth Lord's Day, where the exposition ends with an

introduction to the second commandment. Sermons on the third and fourth commands have been added, because they are some of the finest productions of the author's pen, and because, while not textual, yet they may be considered a fair commentary on the Thirty-sixth and Thirty-eighth Lord's Days. The work has been prepared for the press, and a full index and table of references arranged, by a friend in whose critical taste Dr. Bethune placed great confidence, and whom he named as a person qualified for the task. Memoranda of writers upon the Catechism were found, leading to the conclusion that the author designed to prepare a list of such writers, as a history of its literature. This purpose has been carried out. From these memoranda, some investigations of my own, and the most valuable assistance of Rev. Mr. Van Gieson of Claverack, I have been enabled to append the most complete catalogue of Heidelberg commentators that has ever been published.

ABM. R. VAN NEST, JR.

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EXPOSITORY LECTURES

ON

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

LECTURE I.

THE ONLY COMFORT OF BELIEVERS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IT is a peculiarity of our Church, that she not only directs her children to be taught by a Catechism the Christian doctrine, as every Church of the Reformation has done, but also orders her ministers to explain the Catechism which she has adopted, systematically and regularly before her congregations on the Sabbath day; thus securing the intelligent acquaintance of her people with the articles of our holy faith, and the fidelity of her preachers as expounders of all evangelical truth. Originally it was made the pastor's duty to go through the exposition once a year, each of the fifty-two Sabbaths having its assigned part; but the Church in this country, that the minister might have a more free choice of topics, sometime since, modified the rule, by extending the time over four years; and one lecture or more in each month will meet the requirement of that authority to which we happily owe submission. I undertake the difficult work the more cheerfully, because many of my hearers have but recently associated themselves with our denomination; because the method and the language of the Catechism is well chosen for such as desire the knowledge of the truth, that they may live by it; because many hurtful errors are lamentably prevalent; and because Christ's true disciples will always gratefully listen to plain, scriptural statements

of sanctifying truth. At the same time, we protest against being thought "to hold the Catechism in equal estimation with the Word of God" (*Mark*); or "that orthodoxy should be decided by any other standard than the combined writings of the divinely inspired Prophets and Apostles,—the only rule of faith and practice" (*Zeigland, L'Enfant*);—but we do hold it as the symbol of our belief, and the test of adherence to our Reformed Church, into which no one has a right of entrance who does not acknowledge its published confessions. "If," as Van der Kemp says, "we believe the doctrines of the Catechism, it is not on account of the Catechism, but of God's own Word, out of which and according to which the Catechism was composed. If we prize this little book, we love the Word of God more. We commend it, because it recommends and explains clearly the Word of God to us."

Before, however, we begin its exposition, it may not be out of place to give a very brief sketch of its origin and history. It received its name from the city of Heidelberg, on the left bank of the Neckar, now in the Grand Duchy of Baden, but formerly of the Lower Palatinate, or Palatinate of the Rhine; the fertile territory of which is now divided into Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, Hesse Darmstadt, and other German States. Heidelberg became famous by the establishment of a University there, in 1386 (the oldest of the German seats of learning after those of Prague and Vienna), which contributed greatly to the enlightening of the Palatinate and the circumjacent countries. Early in the fifteenth century, Jerome of Prague came to Heidelberg, advocating the new opinions; and the University took an active part among the controversialists of

that eventful time. In April, 1518, under the reign of the Elector Ludwig, Luther came from Wittenberg to his brethren, the Augustines, at Heidelberg, and set up public disputations in their monastery, gaining applause and followers among the members of the University and the nobility of the Palatinate. These eminent men, but especially Œcolampadius, Martin Tucco, and Brentz, pushed the cause of the Reformation with such vigor as to alarm the champions of Rome, who prohibited the disputations of Luther and his friends, citing Brentz and his associate, Theobald Bilikan, before the Chancellor of the Electorate (Von Banningen), to answer the charge of heresy, and for a time prevented their preaching; but Frederic II., who succeeded his brother, the Elector Philip, being well versed in the disputes, and zealously devoted to the new opinions, began at once the Reformation of the Church; and was accomplishing much good, when the disastrous battle of Mühlberg (24th of April, 1547, in which the Elector of Saxony, the leader of the Reformation, and the Landgrave of Hesse were made prisoners) gave the Emperor Charles V. the power to dictate the so-called Interim, by which the main tenets of Popery were enforced. The Emperor's triumph over the steadfast friends of truth did not last long, however; and by the memorable treaty of Passau, Aug. 2, 1552, the Germans obtained full religious freedom. The Elector, Otto Heinrich, following the example of Frederic II., whom he succeeded, 1556, abolished the mass, with other idolatries of Rome, ordered all images to be removed from the churches, and commissioned Heinrich Stolo, Michael Diller, and Dr. Marbach, from Strasburgh, to make a new Church

order, or ritual, which he caused to be published and adopted by all the churches of the Palatinate. He also established at Heidelberg an "Ecclesiastical Council," the first members of which were Diller, the court chaplain, the electoral Chancellors Ehren and Eraft, and afterwards, on the recommendation of Melancthon, Tielman Hesshus. Already, however, the opinions of Zuinglius, who held the true doctrine, contrary to the consubstantiation of Luther, had many adherents at Heidelberg; and disputes ran high between the two schools. The pious Frederic III., succeeding Otto Heinrich, 1559, at once declared himself on the side of the Zuinglians. He took and pursued his measures with great prudence, but no less zeal; and, after a sharp controversy, he remodelled the churches of the Palatinate after the form of the Zuinglian-Helvetic pattern. He converted a college, which Frederic the Second had established at Heidelberg, into a theological seminary, and gave it professors of the Reformed (not Lutheran) opinions. After accomplishing this, he turned all his attention to the preparing of a catechism for the churches and schools of the Palatinate. There were already several catechisms, besides that of Brenhius and that of Luther, used among the Palatinate churches, causing many disputes from their discrepancies; and they needed a symbolical book of their own, clearly setting forth the true Christian doctrine. The Elector himself says, in the Preface which he wrote to the first edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1563, that it was written in order to remove all error, false doctrine, and differences of opinion from the Church, and establish the Reformation firmly. The Elector proposed the composition of the Catechism, in

1562, to Zachary Ursinus, a learned professor at Heidelberg, and Casparus Olevianus, the court preacher, a favorite of Frederic. Each took part in the composition of the book. Olevianus arranged his as a simple illustration of the covenant of grace; Ursinus prepared two forms of a catechism, — one for children in the schools, another suited to the more advanced. From the labors of both, the Heidelberg Catechism was produced, — the system of which must be attributed to Ursinus. It is, however, certain that Frederic himself took part in the work, especially in the answer to the Seventy-eighth Question, which the Elector says he altered from the words of Theodoret, for reasons assigned.

The Catechism having been completed in the same year that it was begun, Frederic assembled in a synod at Heidelberg all the superintendents and preachers of the Palatinate, whom he expected to examine the book carefully, and see that it was every way according to the Word of God. Part of the church in which the synod met is still standing. They zealously performed the part assigned them, and, expressing their wonder at the learning and the precision shown in it, heartily approved it, particularly and as a whole, recommending its adoption and publication. It was immediately translated into Latin by two learned professors, Lago and Pithozao, and published in both languages at Heidelberg, 1563, by John Mayer, under the title of "Catechism, or Christian Instruction, according to the usages of the Palatinate Churches and Schools."

Though the Latin version was published at the same time with the German, the German, or original, is the authentic copy; "in which," says Altling, "everything

is not only more elegantly, but also more impressively set forth."

The first edition is now extremely rare. It differs not a little from our present copies in form, words, and style, some things being wanting which were afterwards added, and some things supplied which were afterwards left out. It is not divided into the sections for the successive Lord's days. The paragraphs are not distinctly separated, questions and answers being thrown together. The scriptural proofs are few, and not always well chosen. The Eightieth Question, for some unknown reason, is wholly omitted.

The first edition was followed in the same year by another, having the same title and editor, so that it could not be recognized as distinct but for the insertion of the Eightieth Question, and a note at the end, stating that it was added upon the order of the Elector. The language of the Eightieth Question is not, however, the same with that which we now have, (probably from some desire not unnecessarily to offend the Papists,) but is in these words: "And is not the mass, in truth, nothing else but an idolatrous denial of the sole accepted sacrifice, the sufferings of Christ?" There was, probably, yet a third edition in 1563; as a copy, in other respects like the second, gives the conclusion of the Eightieth Question somewhat differently; possibly, however, a new page was substituted in later impressions of the second. The inconvenience of the early arrangement was so much felt, that the fourth edition (with same title) was issued by Mayer, 1573 (duodecimo), in which the questions and answers are divided and numbered, and marked for the fifty-two Lord's days.

The most valuable edition of these times is yet pub-

lished at Neustadt on the Hardt, 1595 (octavo), with the title: "Catechism, or Brief System of Christian Doctrine; together with the Church Ritual, Prayers, and appropriate Proofs from Holy Writ. Also, the Defence of the Heidelberg Theologians against the unfounded charges and attacks with which this Catechism and its excellent Proofs out of Scripture have been unfairly pursued. Also, the Opinion of Martin Luther on the Bread-breaking in the Holy Supper. Also, Answers and Counter-questions on the Six Questions on the Holy Supper, and in which particulars the Evangelical Churches agree or differ respecting the Holy Supper; arranged by Zacharias Ursinus." The Defence given in this previous edition is masterly.

The division of the Catechism into its three principal parts, as set forth in the Second Question and Answer, was imitated from the order of Scripture in the Old and New Testament, as we learn from the Prolegomena, (preface) of Ursinus himself. It is also stated by several learned divines (Theo. Marck in his Catechetical Defence, Dontrein in his Golden Treasure, and Von Alpen in his Prolegomena), that the arrangement followed is that of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Catechism was the object of many and long-continued attacks from various quarters, but was manfully and successfully defended until it gained the confidence and praise of all the Reformed Churches; editions of both the German and Latin versions were numerous, and many commentaries and expositions by way of sermons were written upon it, — the best of which is that of Ursinus himself, published from notes taken from his lectures on the work at Heidelberg, 1569-77, corrected and edited by David Pareus, 1591-98.

The Catechism has been translated into nearly all the civilized languages. A Greek translation, intended for the churches of that name, was made by Frederic Sylburg, and sent at the expense of the States-General to the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Belgian government had it translated into Spanish, that it might be used in the West Indies. The Swiss churches reconstructed the Catechism of Zurich after its clearer expositions. The Reformed churches of Hungary ordered it to be taught and explained in their churches, schools, and universities. It received high commendations from the pious and learned in England; while almost universally on the continent it was acknowledged as a symbolical book of the Reformed churches. It was rendered into Hebrew, Greek, Dutch, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, Arabic, and Malay, as well as in German and Latin. It has passed through not less than five hundred thousand editions, through the press of Germany alone.

But in no country was it more highly honored than in Holland. It was early made the symbolical book of the Dutch Church, ordered to be taught in their schools and universities, and expounded regularly from their pulpits. All their preachers, and teachers, and professors were sworn to hold and promulgate its doctrines; nor was any one admitted to church-membership who did not profess its faith. In the most mournful times of persecution, Peter Gabriel encouraged the constancy of his suffering brethren by preaching from it at Amsterdam. It was first approved by the Dutch divines who were exiles for their creed, in an assembly at Wessel, 1568; the lesser national synod of Dordrecht, 1574, required that all their teachers of religion should sign

the Catechism at the same time with their Confession of Faith; and the great synod of Dordrecht directed their formularies to be prepared, — the first to be signed by professors of theology, the second by preachers, and the third by school-masters, — declaring and promising the strictest adherence to the Heidelberg Catechism. The first and second formularies are preserved in use among our churches here to this day. Many most learned theologians from all parts of Europe being present, by invitation, at that synod, united with their Dutch brethren in thoroughly examining it, and gave it the most unreserved and highest commendation. From the mother churches of Germany and Holland, it was brought by their children to this country, and is now the symbolical book of the Reformed German and Dutch churches of North America; where may God long maintain its holy teachings.

Thus you may see, dear fellow-Christians, through what care and unanimous devotion of pious, learned men the Lord of the Church has prepared and preserved this admirable compend of his pure truth for us. The little book which your children study, has stood the shock of Popery and heresy through bloody centuries, — strengthening the weak, and making heroic the strong. Well may we study, with devout and thankful hearts, a manual so sacred in its doctrines and associations.

You will remark, however, that, unlike most books of the kind, our Catechism takes the order of Christian experience; was prepared for those professing to be Christians, and should be expounded accordingly. May God aid me in the exposition, and bless you in the hearing, for the honor of his holy name. Amen.

FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE ONLY COMFORT OF BELIEVERS.

QUEST. I. *What is thine only comfort in life and death?*

ANS. That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ, who, with his precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation; and, therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready henceforth to live unto him.

QUEST. II. *How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?*

ANS. Three: the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance.

THE answer to the First Question tells us in a few words, what those great doctrines of the Scriptures are, from which the Christian derives his sure and only comfort.

The answer to the Second Question states the order which will be followed throughout the Catechism, by a division of all Christian knowledge necessary for our salvation into three parts.

The several truths contained in both these answers will be discussed at length as we proceed, step by step, with our study of the book. At present, therefore, we shall only ask you to mark —

FIRST: *The comfort which a Christian has in his religious belief.*

SECONDLY: *The method by which he attains a knowledge of this comfort.*

FIRST: *The comfort which a Christian has in his religious belief.*

My beloved friends, — the Catechism does not err, but follows the high, infallible, binding example of the Holy Ghost throughout the Scriptures. When the evangelical prophet, moved by divine influence, proclaimed, as the voice of God, the blessings of Christ's approaching kingdom, he commanded the messengers of grace, saying: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." When the angel came to the shepherds with the annunciation of Christ's advent, what were his words? "Fear not; for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." When Jesus himself preached, what was his argument to gain the ears of the people? "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What is the name given by the blessed Master to his truth but the *Gospel*, or good news, which he has ordained shall be preached to every creature? Nay, does not the term salvation imply that there is a danger of misery from which we are to be rescued, and is not the hope of safety a comfort? The Catechism is right in bringing religion to us under the name of comfort; nor is the promise of comfort discordant with the inculcation of duty, as the subsequent teachings of the book will show.

The chief end of man, in his salvation, as in his creation, is the glory of God; but the glory of our divine Maker and Redeemer is closely connected with

the happiness of all who faithfully obey him. It was that he might have the satisfaction of seeing a family of creatures reflecting in their happiness his own blessedness, that he made our race; it is that he may behold a family of penitent sinners happy again and forever, that he has established the plan of redemption. The holy angels, who advance by their glad service the glory of their Lord, are happy in their ministry; and man, while he continued sinless, was happy in his heavenly Father's approbation. The relation of the creature to the Creator makes it necessary that the happiness and obedience of the subject should be inseparable, and also — his disobedience and misery. It is only when his intelligent creatures break the righteous laws which God has given for their guidance, and thus dash themselves against the immutable principles of his government, that, to manifest the glory of his justice, he makes them miserable in their sins, as the fallen angels are, and as fallen men are, except they be saved through faith in Christ and repentance toward God. The process of the Gospel is the conversion of the sinner from sin to holiness; that through holiness he may be restored to happiness. It is our duty to be happy, because happiness lies in contentment with all the divine will concerning us. Therefore, the Christian is not selfish or blameworthy in seeking his own happiness from that religion, by the avowal and practice of which he endeavors to glorify God on earth and prepare for glorifying him more perfectly beyond the grave. Indeed, it is our enjoyment of the Christian religion, which proves our sincerity, for when we truly love God we must find his service a great delight. Jesus, our divine Master and holy example, served God

for the "joy that was set before him," counting it his meat and his drink to do the will of his heavenly Father, and we follow in his steps when we fight the Christian fight, run the Christian race, and keep the Christian faith, cheered by the hope of winning through grace the crown of life, which God for Christ's sake has prepared for all who love him. It is because God would animate our zeal by such motives that he has given us so many exceeding great and precious promises, causing the holy Scriptures to be "written for our learning, that we through faith and comfort in the Scriptures might have hope."

There is much meaning in the use of the word comfort, to express the Christian's enjoyment of religion, as it supposes that the person who is comforted would otherwise be oppressed by trouble. The angels are happy in heaven, but they need no comfort, for they have no sorrow. Our first parents needed no comfort until sin brought trouble upon them; but Lamech called the name of his son *Noah* (or *Rest*), because, said he: "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." Religion does not at once deliver us out of trouble; on the contrary, "it is good for us to be afflicted;" but it comforts us in tribulations, through which we enter the kingdom of God, enabling us to bear with patience our many sorrows, and to resist with courage our many temptations, by the assurance that God loves us now, and has provided for us an eternal rest hereafter. When we reach heaven we shall need no comfort, because our troubles will be over forever.

Hence the Catechism speaks of our "comfort in life

and death." While life lasts our troubles will last, and death is a fearful trial to the stoutest heart; but when we have passed through and survived that final agony, our joy will be perfect and secure. Until then we have great need of comfort, and find it in our Christian religion, which, though it does not make our present life perfectly happy (for this is not our rest), is rich in comfort to all that believe. Hence the Holy Ghost, through whose gracious influences we receive the truths of the Gospel, is called the Comforter, and those who enjoy his grace are said to "walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Of this the Apostle Paul, our best example of a Christian, and of a Christian preacher after Christ, had sweet experience, as we know from many texts in his writings, but especially from the preface of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

This is the believer's "*only* comfort." They, who have never acquainted themselves with the God of salvation, may find some passing comfort in things of the present world, but at the end will reap shame and eternal disappointment, since things gross and perishable can never satisfy the spiritual and immortal soul; but the Christian looks up to God, saying: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." He is conscious of his

spiritual immortality, and knows that God alone can fill his immortality with blessedness. He draws many comforts through the creatures of God, but only through them as the channels in which they flow down to him from God, the overflowing Fountain. Without God, he has nothing; with God, he has all things. It is the truths of religion which assure him of the Divine favor to his soul; and, therefore, in religion he finds his only comfort. The Catechism is right in its first question, for it puts our religion to the closest proof, when it demands: "What is our only comfort in life and in death?"

The believer's answer to this question, states, *first*, a main fact; *then*, the particulars contained in the fact.

I. A main fact.

"That I with my body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The natural pride of man's heart resists the thought of subjection to God, and of dependence upon him. This was the essence of man's first sin, when, tempted by the devil, he sought to be a god unto himself. So, every man, unconverted from the iniquity of the fall, loves not to retain the thought of God, but walks after the choice of his own heart. He would, perhaps, shrink from denying the existence or sovereign providence of God; but, practically, every man who does not live in the fear of God, depending gratefully upon divine care and conscious of his responsibility to the Great Judge, is an atheist at heart. The Christian has been changed from this proud temper by faith in the Gospel; and he considers it his happiness that he is not his own but belongs to God in Christ; that he is the Lord's,

not only by creation, for surely what is made out of nothing belongs to the Maker, but also by redemption, because having been rescued from eternal ruin, he is the rightful property of his Saviour; that his body is the Lord's, from whom its life with all its faculties is derived, and by whom, when death returns it to the dust, it will be kept for a glorious immortality; that his soul is the Lord's, with all its capacities and affections, to be taught, ruled, sanctified, and employed by him for his glory; that his life is the Lord's, to be spent in his holy, pleasant service; and that his death is the Lord's, because his closing triumph here, and his eternal being after, will praise the mercy of his Redeemer, through whose gracious power he is raised from the depths of sin to the heights of heaven.

He belongs to Christ by a threefold obligation. Christ has *bought* him. His life and happiness were forfeit to divine justice; but Christ has redeemed him from eternal death by the substitution of himself to bear the wrath of God, and so Christ has acquired a full right over him, as the purchase of his atonement. First, he belonged to God his Creator, then he was in the righteous hands of God his Judge, but now he belongs to God the Saviour. "Thine they were," said the blessed Mediator, speaking of his disciples to the Father, "and thou gavest them me." The Father, as the representative of the Godhead against whom they had sinned, gives them to the incarnate Son as the representative of both the Godhead and the Church in the plan of salvation; but gives them not without a price. They are delivered, transferred, set over to the Saviour by virtue of the eternal covenant. Christ has fulfilled his part in satisfying the honor of the divine

law which they had broken, and now the Father fulfils his part in giving them to Christ as his own peculiar property. Wherefore the apostle says: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Again, we are exhorted to look for the "appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people (or a people of his own) zealous of good works." Yet again: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb (a lamb sacrificed for sin) without blemish and without spot." All the property which God, as Creator and Judge, had in the believer is now transferred to God the Saviour.

This the believer acknowledges when he accepts the atoning work of Christ. He is, therefore, Christ's by *his own vow*. He gives, surrenders himself to Christ, making a covenant with him, promising on his part to serve the Saviour by divine help all the days of his life, and Christ on his part engaging to save him until the uttermost.

Then, as a gracious consequence, the believer belongs to Christ because he is *a member of that spiritual body, whose Head is Christ*. There is much meant by the mystery of the believer's union with the body of Christ, which he cannot at present understand; but this we do know, that through it he lives, because Christ's life is in him, that he is corporated with Christ in the enjoyment of all those blessings which the righteousness of Christ has obtained from the Father; and that he is

one with Christ in all the future glory of his Head. It is thus a *vital* union; the believer is a member of Christ's "body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" it is a *fruitful* union, Christ animating him to all good works; for, by another figure, he is said to be grafted in Christ as a branch in a vine, which bears fruit from the energy diffused through it by the vigorous stem; it is an *indissoluble* union, for the body cannot be separated from its immortal Head; "because I live," says the Saviour, "ye shall live also."

Therefore does the Christian rejoice that he is "not his own, but belongs unto his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ." Were he his own, he would be left to the care of himself; but now because he is Christ's, Christ will take care of him as his own, as the purchase of his blood, as a member of his body, as the instrument of his glory, and as a trophy of his triumphant grace. This leads us to consider —

II. The particulars included by the main fact.

1. *Pardon*. — Christ "hath fully satisfied by his own blood for all his sins." Did he belong to himself, he would be obliged to meet in his own person all the guilty consequences of his many offences against God, and be unavoidably overwhelmed by eternal wrath; but now Christ claims him at the hands of divine justice as his; interposing his atonement between the vengeance of God and his ransomed one, covering the unworthy with his merits, representing the penitent in his ever-prevalent prayers, claiming for him acceptance with himself, in whom the Father is well pleased. Oh, how precious, in this light, is the fact that we belong not to ourselves, but to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ!

2. *Deliverance from danger*. — "And hath delivered me from all power of the devil." This deliverance is twofold. The devil, full of malice against men, is employed by God as an executioner of divine vengeance; and in this permitted capacity he claims the impenitent for his victims; but our faithful Saviour, stronger than our arch-enemy, and in his right as the Redeemer, rescues the captive out of his cruel hands. So far as sin had given Satan a right over the body and soul of the sinner that calls to Christ for help, he destroys death and him that has the power of death; placing the penitent, now his own, eternally beyond his baffled rage. This deliverance, however, is a part of pardon, which we have already treated of.

But sinners are said by the Scripture to put themselves wilfully under the control of the devil, when they comply with his temptations. They admit his sophisms, by which he leads the godless astray, into their minds, and so their conscience is deadened or perverted; their crimes against God, often repeated, acquire the fettering force of habit; nay, they get a fearful proclivity to evil, accelerating in impulse as they go downward, until, if divine grace do not arrest them, they plunge from the wickedness of this world to the yet more awful wickedness of hell. Hence they are said to be "sold (like slaves) under sin;" to be "led captive of the devil;" to be "in bondage to Satan." Oh, how shall the sinner, if left to himself, break these more than iron chains? How shall he deliver himself from this fatal bondage? How shall he escape from his cunning, cruel master? "Blessed be God!" exclaims the penitent believer, "I belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; he is my master

now; he has bought me for his own with his most precious blood; he will not leave me in my helplessness; by his Holy Spirit he will break the fetters from my soul; he will give me liberty; his love will be a refuge where my old master cannot reach me. Stronger is he that is for me, than all that be against me." The deliverance may not be complete at once, for sanctification, in the wise process of grace, is a gradual work; the devil yields not his possession of our hearts easily, and the conflict there of sin with godliness may be sharp; but the deliverance is begun in regeneration; it is carried on by an Almighty Power; its certainty is assured by divine promise. The charm of Satan over the believer is met by a master charm in the name of Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins." The Seed of the woman has so bruised the old serpent's head, that the weakest saint shall break him down under foot, and trample over him into life, freedom, and joy eternal. Oh, thanks again to God, that Christ owns us, and we are not our own!

3. *Preservation.* — "And so preserves me, that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things shall be subservient to my salvation." If, instead of belonging to his Saviour, the Christian owned himself, his condition were most miserable, for he would own nothing but himself, while all around him — all that is necessary to his happiness, all present and future events affecting his welfare, are the Lord's, and ordered by the Lord, on whose goodness he has no claim; he would be alone, helpless, utterly destitute and needy. Now, Christ owns him; and as a faithful master cares for his own servant, whom he has bought so dearly; and all things are

Christ's, and he turns all things for the good of his own. The God of salvation is the God of adoption. The believer is united to the only-begotten Son of God incarnate, therefore God adopts him as his child; and the heavenly Father will never suffer any real evil to come upon his regenerate children. When the Father gave to Christ the sinners whom he redeems, he gave all things into Christ's hands, that he might be Head over all things to his Church. All power is given unto Christ, and all his sovereign prerogative he employs for the benefit of his own peculiar people. He has made their eternal salvation his glory, and none can pluck those whom he preserves out of his affectionate embrace. Life is the time of the Christian's preparation for eternity; every thing that concerns him here has a bearing upon his state hereafter, therefore does his faithful Saviour take the tenderest care of him now and until he is brought home. He is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." So nice and intense is this care that the very hairs of his head are numbered. Not one of them falls to the ground without his Father's will. Nay, all things work together for his good. The process is begun, is now carried on, and will be steadily furthered until the design is consummated in the believer's full redemption. Cheerfully, then, does the believer commit his all to Him to whom he has committed himself; his time, to him who takes charge of his eternity, the regulation of his circumstances on earth, to him who has prepared for him a blissful heaven. If he had the care of himself, he might well despair; but now that Christ has the care of him, he knows he is safe, — his body safe, his soul safe, safe in life, safe in

death, safe forever. His griefs may be many, his temptations strong, his infirmity extreme, and therefore he cannot help being troubled; but he has comfort amidst all, because he belongs to his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, whose grace is sufficient for him.

4. *Assurance.* — “By his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready henceforth to live unto him.” Man, left to his own unassisted reason, could never have ascertained the character or will of God, much less discovered the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ; but the faithful Saviour having undertaken to rescue his own from all the consequences of their sins, makes their instruction sure by the grace of his Holy Spirit. Holy men of old were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the books of the Old and New Testaments, which together constitute the Word of God, our only rule of faith and practice; and therefore all we know of religion we have been taught by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are, however, by themselves addressed to men or Christians (as the case may be) generally; and experience, nay, the Word itself, shows that no man applies the testimony of the revelation to his own case, until the same divine Agent who inspired the testimony moves the sinner’s heart to perceive himself addressed by it; but then discovering his guilt and danger, he also sees the sufficiency of atonement offered on his behalf, and trusts in Christ as his Saviour. Such personal faith—the appropriating of the Gospel to our own souls—is the effect of the Spirit’s testimony in our hearts corresponding to his testimony in the Scriptures, and constitutes our assurance of salvation,—by which salvation we mean, according to Scripture, the full accomplish-

ment of the Saviour’s purpose of eternal love toward the sinner that believes on his name. Thus we read: “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;” and again: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;” and yet again: “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit also beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” The promise assures complete salvation to all who believe; when, therefore, we believe, God by his own testimony assures complete salvation unto us.

But it will be asked, May not a sinner deceive himself in thinking that he believes when he does not? Is there not a counterfeit of true faith? and if so, how may we attain the assurance of our salvation? The Catechism meets the inquiry. There is indeed a counterfeit faith, but it may be detected by its fruitlessness, while on the other hand a true faith shows itself in its sanctifying effect on the life and character. The purpose of the Saviour is to save his people from their sins; perfect salvation, which is perfect holiness, is achieved only in heaven, but it is begun on earth. Repentance is the beginning of salvation, the pulsations of a new life which is eternal. The believer is conscious of this great change. He is yet a sinner, he sees his sinfulness more plainly than ever, he feels his weakness and utter inability to contend with the temptations that beset him; but he no longer delights in sin; his desire is to do the will of God, and, by divine

help, to resist all evil. Amidst all his failures and imperfections he discovers a new principle at work in his soul which can have been engendered there only by divine power. This is the testimony of the Spirit. The same Holy One who testifies in the Scriptures and in the hearts of sinners, testifies in the believer's life, making him who was once a rebel now "sincerely willing and ready henceforth to live unto Christ." Oh what a happiness, what a comfort it is, that we belong unto Christ, who not only has died for us, but by his Spirit lives in us, working through us his holy purpose! When we can claim this comfort, "Christ is formed in us the hope of glory."

SECONDLY: *The method by which the Christian attains a knowledge of this comfort.*

This is not the time to dwell upon the answer to the Second Question, as it only sets forth in brief what will be shown more fully hereafter. The order given is, however, most natural, and according to the doctrine of the Scriptures.

I. He must know how great his sins and miseries are. Unless he knows himself to be a sinner, he will not feel his need of pardon; unless he sees his miseries, he will not see his need of a Saviour; unless he feels that his sins and miseries are great, he will not be zealous in escaping from them to the great salvation provided for him. None but those who are conscious of being lost can discover that Jesus is the Saviour they need. This is set forth in the second, third, and fourth Lord's days.

II. He must know how he may be delivered from all his sins and miseries. This includes a knowledge of the whole Gospel, — the purpose of God, the media-

tion of Christ, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is taught from the fifth to the thirty-second Lord's days.

III. He must know how to express his gratitude for such deliverance to God his Saviour. This includes all his duty, to which the Catechism gives the yet higher name of gratitude; the true Christian being moved to render it with a cheerful zeal, not only because God has a right in him, but also because he delights in recognizing and meeting the claims of a Benefactor so gracious, upon all his heart and mind and life. This is treated of from the thirty-second to the last Lord's day.

May God assist our farther studies by his Holy Spirit, that we, being convinced of sin and made to know the preciousness of Christ, may find our only comfort in his choice of us, and our choice of him as our Saviour, Master, and eternal Friend. Amen.

LECTURE II.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR MISERY.

SECOND LORD'S DAY.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR MISERY.

QUEST. III. *Whence knowest thou thy misery?*

ANS. Out of the law of God.

QUEST. IV. *What doth the law of God require of us?*

ANS. Christ teaches us that briefly, Matt. xxii. 37-40: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and with all thy strength. "This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

QUEST. V. *Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?*

ANS. In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor.

THE blessed Master himself declares the reason and purpose of his mediatorial work, when he says: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Had not God been angry with us we should not have been miserable; had we not sinned against God, he would not have been angry with us; had we the power of reconciling ourselves to God, we should not have needed a Saviour; had not our condemnation been very great, we should not have needed so great a Saviour; and had not God, our righteous Judge, been infinitely merciful, he would not have "sent his Only Begotten Son, that whoso believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life." It was our ruin that moved the pity of God, our helplessness that brought his Son to be our Saviour, our guiltiness that made the Saviour a sinless sufferer in our nature, obedient until death on our behalf. To understand and appreciate the salvation by Christ, it is necessary that we should know our misery, its source, its extent, and our utter

dependence upon divine grace through Christ for pardon, favor, a new life, and immortal happiness. To teach us this is the design of the Church, as opened in the section of her Catechism for the second Lord's day; from which we learn,

FIRST: *The Test of our condition:*

The Law of God.

SECONDLY: *The Requirements of the Law:*

Supreme love to God our Lord, and love to our neighbor as ourselves.

THIRDLY: *Our Inability to fulfil those Requirements:*

Being prone "by nature to hate God and my neighbor."

FIRST: *The Law of God is the test of our condition:*

According to the Second Question and Answer, the first branch of Christian inquiry is: "How great our *sins* and *miseries* are." The Third Question is: "Whence knowest thou thy *misery*?" the term *sin* not being repeated; yet the answer is: "Out of the *Law* of God;" which is an implied assertion that our misery is penal or the effect of sin, being our punishment as sinners, and, therefore, in proportion to our sins. The word and character of God allow of no other conclusion, since we cannot believe that he who delights in goodness and mercy would willingly, or without reason, afflict his creatures. Our misery can come only from his anger, and he is angry only with the wicked. His favor, which includes all blessings, is promised to the obedient; his curse, which includes all miseries, is threatened against the disobedient. The degree of our sin is, therefore, the measure of our misery, and that we may ascertain this we must look into the Law of God; for if we have not kept its precepts, the pen-

alties annexed show the guilt, or obnoxiousness, liability to punishment, which we have brought upon ourselves. Hence the Law of God is the only true test of our condition. This is the argument in brief, which we may, not without profit, examine more particularly.

1st. God is Sovereign; by which we understand, that he has the right to rule, that he has the power to rule, and that he does rule over all. To deny this were atheism; for the fundamental idea of God is: The First Cause of all things. The First Cause must be self-existent and independent of all. The same will which alone could create, alone can preserve; and, therefore, God must rule over all. The creation includes moral beings, or beings who have a sense of right and wrong, with powers to act accordingly; therefore, the administration of the Supreme Will must be a moral government. Thus the fact of our existence proves that we belong to God; the fact of our preservation, that we are under the control of God; and the fact of our moral consciousness, that we are subject to the moral government of God. If our lives be in harmony with the principles of the divine government; no evil can reach us, because our Preserver is Sovereign over all; but if we are at variance with his will, no good can reach us for the same reason.

But how may we obtain a knowledge of the divine will which should be the rule of our lives, and in our conformity or opposition to which we are to find happiness or misery? The Catechism answers: "Out of the Law of God;" that is, out of the Law which God has revealed in the Holy Scriptures. For it is clear that none but God, whose infinite wisdom arranged and ordained the principles on which he administers his will,

can discover what those principles are. These may be dimly perceived in the processes of Providence around us, or what is sometimes called the fitness of things; but not sufficiently, for besides that we cannot, from the weakness of our reason, accurately trace the visible effects back to their unseen causes, the development of those effects is as yet very partial. If we were left to learn the will of God concerning our duty from the manifestations of his providence, we should have to wait until eternity before we could begin our obedience, for only in eternity those manifestations are complete. There are a thousand seeming discrepancies in the providential administration of human affairs, which God will not vindicate until he consummates his mighty scheme at the catastrophe of the Judgment. So oppressively embarrassing are these difficulties, that the very advocates of Natural Religion, who bid us learn the character of God and our duty from the fitness of things, make them their strongest, but far from satisfactory, argument for a future state of reward and punishment.

Neither can conscience be a trustworthy oracle. For conscience does not itself determine right or wrong, but is only our faculty of recognizing the distinction between the right and the wrong, when they are presented to us. Recognition is very different from discovery. It is one thing to perceive a path when it is marked out for us, and another to find out a path for ourselves; so it is one thing to see the right when God makes it known, and another to decide upon what is right without his aid. This last is utterly beyond the prerogative or the power of conscience. Indeed, conscience needs education like any other human faculty, and education

supposes some fixed fundamental rules to which it must be conformed. No faithful parent leaves his child to learn morals from its conscience, but presses rules of right upon its conscience. The variety of moral opinions among men is so great, that were it possible to hold an œcumenical council of consciences, there is scarcely a point of morals on which their decree would be unanimous. Nay, the revolutions of moral sentiment in the same man at different stages of his experience and knowledge, show how uncertain and even capricious the judgments of conscience are when left to itself.

Besides, obedience to the dictates of conscience, without a distinct reference to the will of God, is not right, since that were making conscience and not God our Judge and Lord. For a man to think that he can do no wrong while he follows his conscience, unless his conscience be regulated by the will of God, is a self-idolatry and an atheistical pride. A human government does not try its subjects by their consciences, but by its own laws; and excuses a violation of its laws only in those who are not capable of perceiving what those laws require. So will God try us by the laws of his kingdom, not by our own imaginations.

The judgments of individuals being so imperfect, the general opinions of mankind must be also unworthy of confidence. A long and traditional experience of the good or ill effects consequent upon certain courses of action, may have led the world to agree respecting some matters immediately affecting our interests; but history proves the failure of all attempts to frame a system of morals without wisdom from above. The best and wisest of the classical philosophers differed widely among themselves as to the very definition of virtue;

while some, especially Socrates, the most exalted of them all, humbly confessed that the line dividing right from wrong could be drawn only by the finger of him who presides over the universe.

God has himself excluded all question on the subject, by giving, in his own revealed word, the law to which he commands our conformity on pain of his curse.

The Christian, therefore, goes directly to God for instruction, trusting neither to the discoveries of his reason, the dictates of his conscience, the opinions of men, nor the practices of the world. God has the sole right to his service, and he asks from God only how that service should be rendered. Thus he makes the law of God the sole test of his condition, sees his crimes in his transgressions of it, and his misery in the punishment which it threatens. Until he looks at himself in that mirror of infallible truth, he can never judge of his moral character; until he gets a response from that unerring oracle, he can never know what awaits him at the hands of his God. He learns his "misery out of the law of God."

SECONDLY: *The requirements of that law.*

These the Catechism shows by citing the words of our blessed Lord, Matt. xxii. 37-40; though it must be noted that, in giving the first great commandment, the last clause, "and with all thy strength," is added from the parallel passage, Luke x. 27; and that our translator of the Catechism, by carelessly neglecting to copy the Scripture immediately out of his Bible, has allowed a slight but displeasing variation from the English text, which difference we shall correct.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;"

and, from Luke, "with all thy strength." "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Our divine Saviour did not give these comprehensive precepts as of himself, but brought them together from separate parts of the Pentateuch; the first from Deut. vi. 5: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" the second from Lev. xix. 18: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." All that the older scriptures contain of divine morals, of our duty to God and our service to man for God's sake, are summed up in these two commandments. As the Apostle Paul says, Rom. xiii. 10: "Love is the fulfilling of the law;" and again, 1 Tim. i. 5: "Now the end of the commandment is charity (*love*), out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" and the Apostle John in his first epistle, iv. 16: "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him;" iv. 21: "This commandment have we from him: That he who loveth God, love his brother also."

Here is the legislation infinitely perfect. The statutes of human governments fill many volumes, and are then proverbially indefinite, while every attempt to condense them has only made the uncertainty worse; but the whole law of God is written in two sentences, the whole duty of man in one word: Love. This clear, concise rule covers all the specifications of service which God requires of us in all the various circumstances in which we can possibly be placed. Love is the bond of perfectness, the golden chain, which, depending from the

throne of our Father God, and returning to it again, is cast around the brotherhood of his human children, binding us in sweet harmony with him and with each other.

LOVE has never been accurately defined, nor can it be; but we know its meaning from our consciousness and from its effects. We love that being whose character we approve, of whom we delight to think, whose excellences we endeavor to imitate, whose wishes we desire to fulfil and in whose favor we find happiness. Such affection we may, without inconsistency, have at the same time towards several, even many of our humankind, according as they have, through Providence, claims upon us; but our supreme love, comprehending all exercises of love towards his creatures, is demanded by God for himself alone: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

These several terms: "heart," "soul," "mind," "strength," do not, it should be stated, convey to us the precise meaning of the Greek or Hebrew originals which they translate, but collectively in the entire verse they give the full meaning of the Scripture. To define each of them particularly would not be easy, and, if practicable, would require a nice criticism too prolix for the aim of our present discourse. Let us, therefore, devoutly consider the scope of this first and great commandment, which is, that *We must render the Lord our God a supreme, intelligent, zealous love, freely consecrating all our faculties to his praise, and all our energies to his service.*

We are to love God *supremely*. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Every motive

which prompts love, should urge us to love God above all. If intellectual excellence attracts our admiring regard, God is omniscient, the author of all light, the source of all truth; if moral beauty wins our affectionate esteem, his holiness, justice, goodness, and mercy are infinite; if favors received and favors expected, claim our gratitude, from him alone is our being, with all its capacities of enjoyment, and all we do or can enjoy; if rightful authority, administered in faithfulness and considerate kindness, be entitled to a prompt, unswerving, devoted loyalty, he is our Owner because our Creator, our Ruler because our Preserver, our Lawgiver because Supreme Lord of the universe, whose precepts are our sure only guides to happiness, because obedience is accordance with his will; and his chosen glory, the design of his government, is the best good of his intelligent subjects, comprehending all, yet overlooking none. No creature, therefore, should be allowed to rival him in our affections; he must have all our hearts, and none be admitted there except in harmony with our highest reverence, esteem, and love for him who is the Lord our God.

We are to love God *intelligently*. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind." God has endowed us with understanding and reason, that we may know him and perceive the arguments which he addresses through our minds to our affections. The faculty of will or choice which he grants us, cannot be exercised rightly unless intelligently. We are not to love even the Lord our God without motive, or an appreciation of his claims upon our love. We are, therefore, to employ our minds, above all else, in the study and contemplation of those claims that we may

by the very force of logic, cheerfully, yet, as it were, of a moral necessity, fix our hearts supremely upon him to whom of right they belong. We must diligently read his Word, in which he reveals himself for our learning; we must observe his works, in which he demonstrates himself to our senses; we must investigate his doctrines, meditate on his attributes, apply his laws to our consciences, trust in his promises, set his threatenings between us and what he has forbidden, while we practice his commands, that through experience we may be continually acquiring greater proof of their wise goodness; and especially must we seek by earnest, humble prayer the sanctifying grace of his illuminating Spirit, that in close, personal, habitual communion with God, we may grow more like him as we know more of him. Thus consecrating all our faculties to his praise, we shall love the Lord our God with all our hearts and with all our minds.

We are to love God *zealously*.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength."

Soul, here, according to both the originals, signifies the will, or rather the determined purpose of a man; and *strength*, his powers of external action. The two, therefore, may be expressed by *zeal*, which, as we ordinarily understand it, is ardor of pursuit, or earnest purpose carried out in correspondent action. A supreme, intelligent love for God our Creator, Sovereign, and Judge, cannot be inoperative. The reasons for which we love God, his authority and character, show how our love is to be proved. If we love him as our Creator, all our faculties should be consecrated to his glory; if we love him as our Ruler, we should delight to obey

all his commandments; if we love him as our Benefactor, gratitude should make us continually intent upon rendering him returns for his kindness. Thus we truly love him with all our hearts and with all our minds, only when we endeavor to serve him with all our powers in their utmost energy. Hence, love comprehends our fidelity to God as his subjects, and our dutifulness as his children. If we love him with all our hearts, and know what he requires of us, the entire conformity of our lives to his will is certainly secured.

This is the only service which God can accept or a rational creature render. The laws of man refer only to the external conduct, because the human eye can look no further; yet is an unwilling obedience admitted to have no merit, and we always consider the good or evil of an act to lie in the motive. But God looks in upon the heart, and according as he sees that love to him is or is not the ruling principle of our actions, will he accept or disown us, whatever our overt acts may be. He, who refuses his love to God, the perfection of moral beauty and the centre of all obligation, does not love goodness or justice or holiness, evinces a spirit at war with the welfare of the universe, and is justly punished for so monstrous a depravity. On the other hand, he who renders such love to God is justly rewarded for an obedience which on every opportunity will be overtly shown.

Such service is necessary to the happiness of the creature. Our happiness can come only from God who has so fenced us in by his laws, that our welfare depends on our conformity to them; but to obey one whom we do not love, is to do what we hate, thus turning our seeming compliance with right into a source of

misery. The highest reward of obedience is love, and love alone can earn it. Love is the strong charm by which God prompts the discharge of every duty springing from the relations of life, — as the duty of the husband, the wife, the parent, the child, the friend, or the patriot. How much more is love necessary for our duties to God! If we love him, we can never do enough for him, all our inclinations will be absorbed by a desire to please him, and his honor will engross all our energies.

The Second Commandment is like to the first; like in authority, because emanating from the same divine source; and like in the character of the duty which it enjoins, Love. — “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” It is included in the first, because he, who has a right to all our heart and all our service, has the right of commanding our love and service for those whom he commends to our regard.

Our blessed Master, in his parable of The Good Samaritan, has clearly defined “our neighbor” to be every human being brought by the providence of God within the reach of our kindness. The duty is to God the Father of all men, and required for our fellow-man as his child. Selfishness may restrict itself within narrow boundaries, but a soul elevated to the love of God looks over all such littlenesses and comprehends the whole brotherhood of mankind.

The degree of loving service which we are to render our neighbor is to regard his welfare as we do our own. The precept clearly allows a certain degree of self-love, and insists upon no fanciful, impracticable disinterestedness. I am to love my neighbor, because God is his Father; but for the same reason I am to love myself, since he is my Father also, and he has in a

peculiar degree committed my happiness to my own keeping. Our love for ourselves is taken for granted, being the standard by which our love for our neighbor must be adjusted, and therefore, not inconsistent with it; so that we should err if we regarded another's welfare to the neglect of our own. Nor can we love all men alike, since we are commanded by Scripture and Providence to love some especially, as those of our own household and those of the household of faith. We are to love ourselves consistently with the law of God, and according to its directions; so we are to love our neighbor, rendering them all that affectionate service which God enjoins with the same readiness that we would benefit ourselves.

The Master himself has given us the best commentary on the law of love to our neighbor, in Matthew vii. 12, where he says: “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” That is, Whatever we could properly, according to the law of God, expect from others in certain circumstances, we are in similar circumstances to do readily for them, though they be never so unworthy of such kindness, since it is a duty which we owe not to them personally, but to God, and to them for his sake. At the same time, the promise is distinctly conveyed that such service of our neighbor has sure tendency to advance our own welfare.

How clear is this rule, and how universally applicable, when we carry the measure due to others within our own bosoms! How happy would the world be, if all men acted towards each other on this principle! But how vain must be all attempts to secure the common welfare of the race, upon any system of ethics

short of that which first lifts man out of all sinful selfishness to the love of God, and then enables him from that generous fountain to mingle his love with the love of the universal Father as it descends in blessing upon all his children!

Farther discussion of these two commandments is reserved for the time when we must consider the precepts of the Two Tables, given on Mount Sinai.

THIRDLY: *Our inability to fulfil these requirements.*

"Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?"

"In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." This melancholy truth the Christian learns from the Word of God and from experience.

1. The terms, ability, power, and the like, originally referring to physical matters, become very vague when applied to our moral being, the exercise of our will, judgment, and affections; nor, though some have ingeniously but unsatisfactorily dogmatized on the question, could we readily show where man's moral impotence lies, except we be content with acknowledging, what is the fact, that it is a disorganizing corruption of the entire soul. But, putting such lame metaphysics aside, and going to the unerring Word, we find there unequivocally stated the fact of our own utter insufficiency to keep the law of God. The testimonies to it pervade the whole Scripture, and the Divine Spirit labors to express, in our imperfect language and by such figures as we can understand, our complete ruin as moral creatures. It is declared that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one;" that "the heart of man is evil, and only evil, and that continually;" that "all are concluded under sin," conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity; that we are not only weak, but, so far as godly

virtue is concerned, without any strength, nay, "*dead* in trespasses and sins." The plan of salvation proceeds on this fact. When we were impotent, "without strength, Christ died for the ungodly." "If righteousness" could have "come by the law (*i. e.* through our keeping of the law), then is Christ dead in vain." That this is true only of some is disproved by the offer of the Gospel to all men: "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. . . . He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

So the sanctifying or illuminating and strengthening grace of the Holy Ghost, is radical in every one that is saved. He renews us by a fresh begetting, a re-creation, a resurrection from the dead; and no man, "except he be born again" "of the Spirit," "can enter the kingdom of God." So we see that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "The carnal mind (*i. e.* the mind of man in his natural state) is enmity against God;" and since, as we have seen, love to our neighbor proceeds from our love to God, man is by nature at enmity with his neighbor.

This enmity against God and our neighbor may not at once be utter and extreme, for living, as we do, under a remedial system, the restraining grace of God is round even the unregenerate; but we are prone to it, and were the grace of God entirely taken from us,

as it will be from the lost in hell, there is no depth of depravity to which we should not sink. Our enmity against God may not appear against his goodness, or his mercy, or his love; but it is naturally strong against what is equally his character — his holiness and justice; for whenever his law or his providence clashes with our inclination, it is rampant, bitter, and obstinate. So are we enemies of our neighbor, when he crosses our supposed interest. Whence also could come such malicious crimes, such bloody wars, such envious calumnies, as those which fill the earth with clamor and rapine and cruelty! Thus, the Apostle describes the heathen who had departed from God as filled with evil, stained by the most hideous pollutions, “covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” It is the proneness, not of the individual, here and there, but of human nature, of the race; for everywhere we see symptoms of this depravity; everywhere men make laws to guard against it; every penal statute, every gibbet, every prison, every lock on our doors, testify to man’s belief that his fellow-man is prone to hate God and his neighbor. Christianity, or other restraining influences of God’s government, may modify, and to some extent hold back the tendency, but in what man has been and what man now is, when grace is not exercising some control, we see what he would be were he left alone.

The Christian’s experience confirms the divine declaration. Who that looks upon these two precepts of God’s law can say he has kept them, or that he could keep them perfectly? Who of us can love God, with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself? The believer knows he cannot; he knows that there is within

him a tendency downward, which none but God can change; that there is a lack in him, call it what you will, and place it where you will, which nothing but God’s grace can supply, but without which he is lost, — powerless to do good, and prone to all evil. It is this that he expects through Christ; this he asks of God by the Holy Spirit; this he relies upon alone for eternal life.

O blessed Gospel, that thus meets us in our last extremity, turning our despair into joy! O blessed Law of God, whose very terrors drive us to welcome Christ! O blessed Bible, which thunders on the one page from Sinai the curse of eternal death, and on the next shows us Christ on the cross dying in our stead; then beyond it, Christ on his throne beckoning the penitent to eternal life! Glory to God the Lawgiver! Glory to God the Redeemer! Glory to God the Sanctifier! Glory to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, our Covenant God, throughout all ages! Amen.

LECTURE III.
THE FALL OF MAN.

VOL. I.

4

THIRD LORD'S DAY.

THE FALL OF MAN.

QUEST. VI. *Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?*

ANS. By no means; but God created man good, and after his own image, in righteousness and true holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him.

QUEST. VII. *Whence, then, proceeds this depravity of human nature?*

ANS. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.

QUEST. VIII. *Are we, then, so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclining to all evil?*

ANS. Indeed we are; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.

THE lesson of to-day sets forth a doctrine of Christianity at which, more than any other, infidels and heretics have aimed their assaults; and no wonder, since, if it be not true, our whole creed is without consistency and must fall to the ground; but the purpose of this discourse is not to establish or defend it by any argument of our own. The Catechism undertakes no more than to teach, systematically and very briefly, what doctrines God himself has declared throughout the Holy Scriptures; and the Church, when commanding her ministers to preach upon the Catechism, intends no more than that they should teach only what the Catechism teaches, assisting her people to understand it by farther explanations conformable with the Scriptures and the other articles of evangelical faith. Our duty, therefore, is to bring before you what God asserts to be true; if after that there be any questioning as to how

these things can be, the dispute is not with us but God, and we leave the objector in his hands who needs no help from our logic.

You will also remember that on the point before us, has turned a long, extensive controversy, filling many volumes by the most acute pens ; and that it is not possible in a single hour even to touch many things, which the most candid hearer might wish made clear.

The section for the Second Lord's Day having taught, that we are "prone by nature to hate God and our neighbor," inquiry is supposed to arise respecting the origin of such an evil tendency :

6th. "*Did God create man so wicked and perverse ?*" which being denied, and contrary facts stated, it is asked :

7th. "*Whence, then, proceeds this depravity of human nature ?*"

And the answer gives the true history of our most mournful ruin ; whereupon another question is put as to the degree of our moral decay :

8th. "*Are we, then, so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness ?*"

The reply confirms the doctrine already asserted, pronouncing our condition, if left to ourselves, utterly desperate ; but, at the same time, points out a sure way of escape through the gracious power of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, and the Author of all life.

Thus we have our subject and the order of handling it :

The subject :

The origin of human depravity.

The order :

FIRST: *It is not from our Creator.*

SECONDLY: *It is from the sin of our first parents.*

We need not treat of the answer to the last question separately, as the first part is properly included by our second head, and the latter will be fully discussed under a subsequent division of the Catechism.

Before, however, we enter upon the explanation supplied us by our Church, it should be remarked, that the origin of evil is a difficulty not peculiar to the Christian creed. The actual existence of evil, physical and moral, is a fact not to be denied. Death, with all its painful precedents, is upon all men. Crime or wrong-doing, by which we mean violation of laws regulating our own and the common happiness, is seen everywhere, among all nations, in all circumstances. There are degrees of wrong-doing, and there may be exceptions as to particular kinds of wrong-doing, still a tendency to do wrong is as much, or as really, a characteristic of human nature as liability to death. Every civilized community, and, though less formally, savage tribe ordain statutes for the punishment of murder, theft, adultery, not because this or the other individual is particularly suspected of a purpose to commit any of those crimes (which, at the moment, may or may not be the case), but because the nature common to all men makes the commission of such grievous wrong so probable that severe restrictions, with penalties, are necessary to prevent what all agree would be evil ; nor are any of us affronted at being put under a government of the kind. Nay, from our own consciousness of human weakness, we consent to laws for the control of all. Thus, those who reject the Bible are as much bound as we are to account for this fact of human corruption, which, because it is universal, cannot have been fortuitous, but must

come from a source involving all men. Philosophers of all ages, people, and sects, have sorely felt this difficulty at the very outset of their ethical observations; and a Christian does not create, but obeys the necessity, when he seeks in the Word of God for an answer to the sad question, — whence originated the depraved tendency of our world-wide race? Our present duty, therefore, is to consider that answer as it is brought before us by the Catechism.

FIRST: *Human depravity is not from God.*

As the depravity is in human nature, and human nature sprang from the creating will of God, our first thought is: Can it be that man came into being with such an evil disposition? or, as the Catechism has it:

“*Did God, then, create man, so wicked and perverse?*”

But at once we shrink from such an impious suggestion with horror, which revulsion is strengthened by the scriptural account:

“By no means; but God created man good and after his own image in righteousness and true holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him.”

1. A positive denial: “*By no means.*”

There can be no thought so shocking as that God is in any way the author of evil, which he would be if he had created man wicked and perverse; since, then, the inference would be irresistible that the will of God is evil, and the sovereign rule of the universe held by the hands of ONE who can be neither wise, nor just, nor good. Where, then, could his moral creatures look for a standard of right, for the reward of virtue or the punish-

ment of vice? Better the blankest atheism than such a belief, — better the wildest chance than such a government, — by whose capricious cruelty all the elements of happiness and misery are thrown into dark, waning, destructive confusion. No! It cannot be! “By no means” can it be! Let man’s wickedness and consequent misery come whence they may, they cannot have come from the creating will of God. “Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar.” Some may ask here, if it be not asserted in Scripture that God made men wicked, where the Wisdom says (Prov. xvi. 4), “The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” But that text bears no such interpretation. God, who made all things for himself, certainly made wicked men, yet that is very different from making men wicked. He made them, and they became wicked; and what the Wisdom means, is that the wickedness of men does not put them beyond the control of God, neither will it defraud him of his glory; for they are still his creatures, therefore in his power; and on the great day of retribution (a most evil day to them), he will abundantly display the glory of his justice by their signal punishment. So says the Psalmist (lxxvi. 10), “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain;” *i. e.* God in the wisdom of his providence will overrule the malignant passions of men to the praise of his government, and suffer them to go no farther. The same principle is woven through our whole subject.

II. The contrary account in Scripture.

(1) “God created man good; (2) and after his own image in righteousness and true holiness; (3) that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love

him, and live with him in eternal happiness, to glorify and praise him."

Here we have 1. The creation of man good. 2. The form of his goodness; after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. 3. The design of his creation after the divine image; that he might be capable of glorifying God by an eternal, spiritual, and happy obedience.

The logical order of the thoughts is the reverse of the words.

1. The design of God in creating man was, that he might be capable of glorifying his Creator by an eternal, spiritual, and happy obedience.

The English translation of our Catechism is not well done, and there is an obscurity in the last phrase of the answer now before us, which is made worse by defective punctuation. As it now reads, it would seem that the words, "to glorify and praise him," had reference only to man's "living with God in eternal happiness," while, really, they relate to all that has gone before. A comma put after happiness, will greatly help to clear the sense; but there should have been inserted some such phrase as,— "And this as the method" "to glorify and praise," or "for the purpose of glorifying and praising him."

By the *glory* of God is to be understood the manifestation of his infinite attributes; and he is glorified by his works, when they show proofs of his attributes exerted upon them. The radiant sun, the fruitful earth, the cunning anatomy of plants and animals, all that is discoverable in unconscious nature, glorify God.

Yet it is necessary to such glorification of God that there should be creatures capable of perceiving and

recognizing the glory so manifested. Being created with these spiritual faculties, they exhibit in their own nature proofs of the divine glory as much more wonderful than those of unconscious nature, as conscious spirit is more wonderful than mere matter. But they render a higher tribute of glorification, when they give their adoring praise before kindred intelligences to the Author of all. The glory of God in the revelation of truth to his creatures, whom he has gifted with capacity to receive, is unspeakably more noble than his glory in his works; and those creatures return him a correspondent glory when they acknowledge his truth with homage for his divine wisdom; but the highest degree of glorification which intelligent creatures can yield, or God can receive, is their perfect happiness derived from conformity to his will, for then are the power, wisdom, goodness, and holiness of God most fully manifested.

It was to give man a fitness for thus glorifying his Creator that God made him, as Scripture everywhere testifies. God had already, according to many scriptural intimations, created various orders of intelligences; but, so far as we know, they are all pure spirits, living, acting, serving, and adoring, only in spheres of thought. Man alone was a union of the material and spiritual. Man alone was intrusted with lordship over material things, was capable of deriving happiness from God in a legitimate use of them, and charged with the office of glorifying God by such a happy obedience, on a theatre where mind and matter are united and coöperative. In him the things of heaven and earth are brought together. In him, as the connecting link, the two grand divisions of the Almighty's works are met. It is true that this is seen very dimly in the first Adam;

yet when we know of the woman conceiving from the Holy Ghost the Second Adam, and see Jesus, our Brother, at the right hand of God, the demonstration is complete.

The design of God was to give man a *fitness* for thus glorifying him; but the divine purpose was not absolute that man should so glorify him, as the immediate sequel shows, though the ultimate issues of redemption will triumph gloriously over the ruins of the fall. The design was carried out. Man did receive from his Creator entire fitness to glorify and enjoy him; though, as we shall see, there was necessarily in that very fitness an element which made his defection possible. "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

2. The form of man's moral creation was "after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness." "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." What is meant by the image of God in which man was created? The parallel and nearly synonymous term "likeness," used by God himself, gives us the key to the explanation.

Man being designed to reflect, spiritually, the spiritual glory of God, by his enjoyment of God through an intelligent conformity to the divine will, it was necessary that he should have a correspondent capacity, and be, so far as a finite creature may, a counterpart of his infinite Creator. This could not be properly true of his body, for organized matter cannot resemble the spiritual ONE, "whom no one hath seen or can see;" and the language of the text cited guards us against

such a mistake: "In the image of God created he him," *i. e.* man irrespective of bodily distinctions, as "in Christ there is neither male nor female;" but when those corporeal differences are spoken of, it is simply said, "Male and female created he them;" no mention being made of the divine image. It must, therefore, relate to the soul, and in fact proves that man has, besides his body, a spirit, because he is like God who is a spirit, and he "must worship" the spiritual God "in spirit and in truth."

Man is a creature: therefore, all that he is, and has, must be derived, and, for the same reason, finite; God, the origin and source of all, must, on the other hand, be infinite. Still there will be a correspondence between the finite receiver and the infinite impartor. The happiness of the spiritual creature must come from the same causes as the spiritual creature; and hence there must be a spiritual resemblance.

Thus this image, likeness, or counterpart of God in man may be seen threefold.

1. In understanding: all knowledge is original with God, but he imparts truth to man, and man must have understanding as the capacity to receive it. Hence the Catechism gives as one reason why man was made in the image of God, — "that he might rightly know God his Creator."

2. In affection: by which we mean what is among us commonly understood by heart; that is, a capacity of being so affected by the character and disposition of those to whom we have relations that we return them love, or the reverse. But God manifests his love towards us, and requires our love in return. Hence, man must have affections correspondent to the relations

which he has with God, and in the economy of God with his fellow-creatures. So the Catechism gives as another reason why man was made in the image of God, "that he might . . . love his Creator;" and the Apostle John: "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

3. In will: by which we mean a power of choice, or of determining our actions, within our sphere. The will of God is supreme over all things, for it is the only source whence they exist. He rules over unintelligent things by mere force, and they, being unconscious, cannot resist or obey. But, having given man understanding and affections, he presented to his understanding, — and through his understanding to his affections, — arguments or motives for the determination of his choice, that man might act freely according to his own will; and an intelligent, hearty choice of that which God approves is the service which the Creator required at man's hands. Here, then, you see the triple likeness of the creature, man, to the Creator, God. God understands, man understands; God loves, man loves; God chooses, man chooses.

But there must have been something more to complete the correspondence of the creature to his Creator; and what this was we learn from the description which the Apostle gives of regenerated man, or sinful man in whom the original likeness is reimplanted by the Holy Ghost. We find it in two nearly parallel texts: one, Ephes. iv. 23, 24: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" the other in Coloss. iii. 9, 10: "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the

new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Here we see that the image of God consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. In knowledge, that is, a right use of the understanding; in righteousness, that is, a proper discharge of relative duties, to which love, as the two great commandments teach, is necessary, for "love is the fulfilling of the law"; and holiness, which is conformity of will to the will of God, or choosing as God chooses. God, being unchangeably, because essentially, perfect, never makes an error in understanding; never fails in righteousness toward his creatures; never is inconsistent with himself, which is his holiness. Man, therefore, when he had the divine image, was sound in understanding, disposed to a loving discharge of all his relative duties, and conformed willingly to the will of God. But, being a creature, he was unlike God, neither infallible nor unchangeable; and, having the power of choice, he might choose evil or good. This was necessary to his original constitution as a moral creature; for else his conduct, however in accordance with the divine rule, would not have been the result of his knowledge, his love, or his will. You could not predicate of him either right or wrong any more than you could of a brute, a plant, or a stone. Still, though he had this faculty of choice, he was under no bias to wrong, but, on the contrary, received from his Creator with his being a disposition to do well. Hence, the Catechism gives a third reason why man was made in the image of God, "that he might live with God in eternal happiness," which he could not do unless he chose as God chooses, partaking of the divine blessedness as he agreed with the divine character, which is the reason of the

divine blessedness. The blessedness so acquired would have been for ever, because death came in only as "the wages of sin;" and the soul of man being immortal would have lived perpetually with God. Nay, his body also would have been incorruptible, and the whole man happy through conformity to the divine will. But of this we need not now speak further, as it will come under consideration in another place.

Thus, God created man good, with no evil in him, or disorder tending to evil, but fitted for the duties and circumstances which should be assigned him; so that in no sense has the evil, moral and physical, which subsequently came upon man and is now upon all his descendants, been the fault of his Creator.

SECONDLY: *Human depravity is from man himself.*

The 7th Question asks: "*Whence, then, proceeds this depravity of human nature?*" If man was not created wicked and perverse, how became he so?

The Catechism answers:

"From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt that we are conceived and born in sin."

This asserts: the cause of the corruption to be the sin of our first parents; and: the manner of its transmission to be our conception and birth in sin; which together give us the doctrine held by the Reformed Churches, according to the Word of God, that all men are involved in the fatal consequences of Adam's sin.

Or, as the clear language of the Westminster divines expresses it: "They sinned with him and fell with him in his first transgression."

The word *fall*, though nowhere it has such reference in Scripture, is commonly used by believers of Christian

doctrine to signify man's loss of the high place which he had when originally created. This was brought about by the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise. The particular act of disobedience on which such fatal consequences ensued, must, therefore, have been the first of which man was guilty, because before that he was blameless, and immediately after it, he was cast out of Paradise. It is, then, for us to inquire how our race were so deplorably concerned in that one sin of our first parents? This we may learn from a collation of Scripture: Gen. ii. 15: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat;" (mark, the tree of life was among those not forbidden to him;) "but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Mark here, that from the nature of this command with the threatening, there is implied a covenant by which God promises life on condition of his obedience, since death could come only through his disobedience. Chap. iii. 1 . . . "Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." (Other Scriptures warrant us in believing that the devil was here under the form of the subtle reptile: "That old serpent called the devil," Rev. xii. 9.) "And he said unto the woman: Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye

die." (The covenant had been made with the man before the woman was formed; but she rightly judged herself involved by it, as making with man the human nature.) "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Adam, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said: The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity

between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. . . . And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man. And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. v. 3. "And Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his image."

Now compare with this the doctrine of the Apostle, when opening the way of redemption by Jesus Christ; Rom. v. 12: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. . . v. 18. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one,

the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." So, also, 1 Cor. xv. 21. . . . "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 45. "The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

There are many things in the original story and the apostolical comments, upon which it might not be unprofitable to remark, if we had time; but since we have not, we shall be confined to the inferences immediately touching our subject. Let us, however, be on our guard against the sceptical notion that the Mosaic account is an allegory; for it is in no way so distinguished from what follows or from what goes before. If part be allegory, the whole is allegory; the account of creation is allegory, man is but an allegorical being, and all human beings, you and I and the rest of our race, are mere figments of a poetical description. The facts of the curse are present with us now, — the creeping serpent, the ungenerous earth with its thorns and thistles, the pains of childbirth, the necessity of toil, the death which returns us all to the dust. The whole reasoning of the apostles respecting the plan of redemption assumes the facts given by Moses to be actual and not figurative. Nay, if the first Adam fell not, there is no redemption by the second, Christ Jesus our Lord. The simple means by which the obedience of our first parents was tried, so far from being puerile, as some profanely think, were in perfect accordance with the general economy of God, and show more plainly than more complex or imposing arrangements could have done the importance of the principle that a holy safe-

ty lies in obedience to God. Innocent man was yet dependent on his Maker for daily food, and God put the test there that it might be most obvious.

From the whole, then, we learn, —

a. That Adam forfeited by sin the favor of God, lost the upright likeness, which he originally had, to his Creator, and came under condemnation to death, being driven out of the garden where God held communion with him, and shut out from all access to the tree of life, the fruit of which was the means of immortality. How a pure being could fall into sin, we have not philosophy enough to explain, nor has the Holy Ghost answered such curiosity. He had the faculty of choice, from the exercise of which God could not directly restrain him without destroying the essence of his moral being. But that he did sin, we know from the testimony of God; and that the punishment of sin came upon him, we know by experience.

b. When he fell, he fell not alone, but all his descendants fell with him, as the Apostle expressly asserts: "In Adam all died." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." When the covenant was made with Adam, it was made with human nature, for he was then the whole of human nature, and, by his progenitive character, the head and representative of all the human nature that should proceed from him. Had he remained sinless, no doubt his posterity would have been sinless; but he fell, and his posterity fell with him. Had he retained the holiness which constituted the image of God, he would have begotten his children in the image of God; but having lost that image, his children were begotten and conceived in his own image. The natural faculties of understanding, affection, and choice,

his nature retained, but greatly shattered and under a fatal bias to sin; for, though one may be free to fall from a precipitous height, he is not free to regain his lost place. His moral likeness to God was gone from him and he could not give it to his offspring. Death moral, death natural, death as the result of sin, death as the punishment of sin, was upon him, upon his very nature; and, therefore, upon all who derived their nature from him. Death was distinctly threatened as the punishment which would follow Adam's breach of the covenant, and that death involved the moral being of his soul as well as the decay of his body. "The wages of sin is death;" and the consent of Evangelical Scripture declares that the death now visible is but the faint yet sure foreshadowing of death eternal, which, as the favor of God is life, must be the wrath of God on body and soul forever. Death is upon us all. We have the evidences of it in our frames. We are of a mortal race. Our forefathers are dead. We too must die, for we have derived death from them with our life. As we all die with Adam, we must all be condemned with him, and are corrupt with him. The evidences of our moral depravity are as plain as those of our bodily death; and so as we fell in Adam, are we depraved with him. "We are," says the Apostle, "by nature the children of wrath;" and again: "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." God deliver us from the death eternal!

c. Our corruption is derived from Adam through our conception and birth: "Behold," says the Psalmist, when accounting for his foul transgressions, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." In the same manner that we have our descent

from Adam, we have our fallen evil nature. Whatever be the difficulties which lie about this fact, it is true. The parental relation of Adam to us involves us with him. Our whole nature, in some proper sense, is from him. Our sins are imitations of his; we commit wilfully personal sins, but behind all these there is sin in us and guilt upon us; we "are by nature the children of wrath," begotten in the likeness of man after he had lost the image of God. So certainly as we are his children, are we sinners prone to all evil, except we be regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Such, my dear hearers, is our sad state by nature. Our cavils cannot change the fact; but the grace of God can change our condition by changing our nature. Let us cease to challenge the justice of God in condemning us, and invoke his ever ready mercy to create in us clean hearts and renew right spirits within us.

Let us seek the same blessing for our fellow-sinners, our brothers in human fallen nature; and strive by all the means which the Gospel offers to bring them under the headship of Christ, the second Adam; that, as in the first they died, so in him they may all be made alive by his quickening Spirit unto eternal holiness.

Especially do you, who are parents, look upon those who are, through you, children of sin because your children; and leave no method untried that you may be, by divine help, their fathers and mothers in Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Glory. Amen.

LECTURE IV.

PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

QUEST. IX. *Doth not God, then, do injustice to man by requiring from him in his law that which he cannot perform ?*

ANS. Not at all; for God made man capable of performing it; but man, by the instigation of the devil and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts.

QUEST. X. *Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished ?*

ANS. By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them in his just judgment, temporally and eternally, as he hath declared: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

QUEST. XI. *Is not God, then, also merciful ?*

ANS. God is indeed merciful, but also just; therefore his justice requires that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, everlasting punishment, both of body and soul.

THE section of the Catechism for the Second Lord's Day taught us the utter inability of man to keep the law of God; that for the Third, how our nature, which God created good, became so corrupt; and the lesson of to-day, declares the certain, most terrible punishment of sin by the wrath of God.

An inquiry is supposed, whether or not the obligation of man to obey the commands of God is removed by his inability:

9th. "*Doth not God, then, do injustice to man by requiring from him in his law that which he is unable to perform ?*"

This being denied for reasons given, farther inquiry

is made respecting the consequences of man's wickedness :

10th. "*Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?*"

The answer to which is, that God has not only made known his holy anger with us because of our innate depravity and overt crimes, but has pronounced an awful curse upon every transgressor of his law. Nor will the compassion of God mitigate the severity of his vengeance, for the answer to question the

11th. "*Is not God, then, also merciful?*" reminds us that executive justice is essential to divine sovereignty, and that no one attribute of God can oppose another.

Thus we have our subject and its order : —

The subject :

The Punishment of Sin.

The order :

FIRST: *The accountability of fallen man.*

SECONDLY: *The sentence passed upon him.*

THIRDLY: *The certainty of its execution.*

FIRST: *The accountability of fallen man.*

The original obligation of man to obey God, with his consequent responsibility for his actions, was shown on the Second Lord's Day, and springs necessarily from the relation of the moral creature to his Creator. The difficulty before us is, how, since man has lost his ability to keep the law, he can be held liable to punishment for not keeping it; and whether it is or is not charging God with injustice to assert that he so holds him. The Catechism answers :

"Not at all, for God made man capable of performing it; but man, by the instigation of the devil, and

his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and his posterity of those divine gifts."

The truth of the principle that ability must precede obligation is admitted, but its applicableness to the case of fallen man is denied; and the argument takes the form of a syllogism, thus: God made man able to keep the law given him; But man by his own wilful act deprived himself and his race of that ability; Therefore, the law with its penalties is justly binding upon us. The first was shown in answer to the fifth question; the second in answer to the sixth; the third, though following irresistibly, we may briefly discuss.

The law with its penalties is justly binding upon us, notwithstanding our inability to perform its requisitions.

1. God has declared it to be so in both his word and providence. In his word, he makes the law the rule of our duty, as: in the promulgation of its two tables on Sinai, and the confirmation of it by our Lord in the two requirements of love to God and love to our neighbor; while he pronounces us utterly unable to keep it, and describes us as "without strength," "dead in trespasses and sins," needing a new life, a new nature, and the imputed righteousness of Christ before we can be saved, because "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified;" at the same time forewarning us of the judgment when he will render unto every man according to his deeds, and denouncing the fearful curse, which is no less than the wrath of God forever, against "every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." If God condemns us for not keeping the law, which he himself says we are unable to keep, who will dare deny his justice?

Shall we set up our opinion against his, who, while he pronounces us guilty, "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Surely, one so merciful cannot be unjust.

His providence agrees with his word, for death is the penalty of the law, and "death hath passed upon all men," which is clear proof "that all have sinned." The full infliction of the penalty is reserved for the next world, yet here we see that mainly the happiness or unhappiness of men springs from their conformity to the law of God or their transgression of it; so much so, that those governments which copy most nearly their laws from the divine, offer the best security for the common good; and, that those nations which violate the rules of righteousness and purity divinely laid down are sure, if not at once, in succeeding generations to bring disaster and ruin on themselves; showing, beyond a doubt, that the law with its penalties originally imposed on man is still the law of his nature under which his Creator holds him. Nor, as has been intimated by these examples, are those penalties of sin always sent only upon the actual transgressor: posterity suffers from the crimes of their ancestors; children through many generations, often until families become extinct, inherit disease and weaknesses of both mind and body through the vices of their forefathers; while a very large majority of deaths, with the ordinary accompaniments of pain and distress, is of children too young to have contracted guilt by their own voluntary sin. How can we account for these facts (which no one can deny) otherwise than by the theory of the Scriptures, that the primeval law is still dominant over us;

that the corruption of man is derived with his nature; and that all his race, in consequence of Adam's sin, are held guilty (that is, obnoxious to the penalties of the divine law) before God.

2. The law under which man was created, with its penalties, is unchangeable. God adapted it to his nature and his nature to it. It is the result, as has before been said, of his relations, moral and physical, to his Creator, and to the system of things in which the Creator has placed him. Unless all the laws of this world, as created by God (which we must believe are in harmony with the laws of the universe, because the Legislator is one and the same), be changed, the particular law, under which man was at the first subject, must remain unaltered. We distinguish sometimes, for the sake of argument, between the natural and the penal consequences of sin; between the mischief which sin brings about in the condition of the sinner, and the miseries which the wrath of God inflicts on him because he is a sinner; but the distinction is nominal, and has no warrant from fact. The Creator is the Lawgiver, and he, who is both Creator and Lawgiver, is the only Judge. He would allow no hurt to reach the innocent, and has arranged all things for the happiness of the obedient; consequently, whatever evil comes upon any moral creature must come from the wrath of God and is a punishment of guilt. The skeptic, making out of his own purblind fancy a law according to which he would fashion the righteousness of the infinite Creator, may presumptuously deny that our good God can be so severe as to send misery on the whole race of man through Adam; but the denial is in the teeth of fact. Misery has come upon the

whole race; depravity, physical and moral, has been and is characteristic of every individual who has a human nature. Whence came that misery, if not from the Creator? and why from the Creator, if it be not the punishment of sin? If the fact of human misery were not obvious, we might tolerate for a moment the hypothesis of the objector; but, when we see and feel a fate so universal, we cannot doubt that it is from God, and when we know that it is from God, we cannot doubt that it is just.

Besides, when the law was ordered and given as both the rule of man's duty and the method of his happiness, he was able to keep it; since he has so lost his ability that (in the language of Scripture) he "cannot please God;" must then God lower the demands of his law and accommodate it to our fallen nature? No one can soberly contend for that. Should a law punishing murder restrain its operation against the wretch who has become so malignant and brutal that he cannot keep from shedding blood for revenge or rapine? Or should the poisonous effects of strong drink cease in the constitution of the drunkard, because he cannot resist the terrible thirst which he has wickedly acquired? Upon such a principle, the worse a man is, the less pure and exacting the law over him should be. It is not the fault of the law, but of the sinner, that he comes under its penalties, which are intended, not to make man miserable, but to deter him from sin, which will certainly make him miserable.

3. The inability of man to keep the law of God, which we derive through our descent from Adam, is not of such a nature as to free us from blameworthiness. There may have been, there probably has been,

all along with our reasoning, an objection in the minds of some, that the absence of power to obey renders obedience on our part impossible, which seems to go far towards relieving us from guilt. But let us consider more closely the nature of this inability, and where it lies. It is, doubtless, a moral inability, for it respects moral acts; and as morality (or right and wrong) belongs to the will, the inability must lie in the will. Mark,—in asserting that our inability is of the will, we are far from asserting, as some with more art than correctness have done, that we have a natural ability to keep the law of God. To speak of a natural ability to do a moral act, is a confusion of terms utterly unjustifiable, and can lead to no sound result. The exercise of what are termed our natural faculties, (not those of our bodies but of our souls,) such as the faculty of understanding or loving, have a moral character only, because of the exercise of the will through them. Morality is, we know, inseparable from the exercise of those, so called, natural faculties, because the exercise of them is always by the will; but, for the same reason, their moral character is derived from the will. To know God is our duty, yet could not be our duty if we were without the faculty of knowing; to love God is our duty, yet could not be if we had not the faculty of loving; but as both our understanding and our heart are exercised by our will, there can properly be no ability to do what is moral where the will is not concerned and engaged. To deny the moral ability to do right (by which is understood ability of will) is to deny all ability to do right. At the same time, it must be seen that there is a reflex action of the understanding and affections upon the will, biasing it,

and, where it is weak, controlling it, because the will itself is determined (so far as we can discover the laws of its mystery) by the motives presented to it. This, however, strengthens the objection to the claim of natural ability to serve God, because both Scripture and experience teach us that the understanding is darkened and weakened by sin, while our affections have from the same fatal cause acquired a proneness to evil, thus influencing the will to wrong as well as being directed by it. In fact, our whole spiritual being is disorganized from its proper balance and adjustment, needing an entire renovation as a whole, and in each part. So the Apostle declares that God worketh in the believer "both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" his understanding must be enlightened and his heart changed. This corruption of his so-called natural powers does not free the sinner from guilt, because he has himself corrupted them wilfully. Had God created man without eyes, he surely would not have required from him an admiring study of visible creation; but if man, after having received sight, had wilfully deprived himself of his eyes, he would not by so criminal an act have escaped from his duty, because his acquired inability would have been a sin involving all the consequent omissions; just as human law holds a drunken man responsible for all the wrong he does while in a state of self-assumed craziness. God gave man a sound reason and unpolled affections; but he depraved those faculties wilfully, and is justly responsible for the consequences of that depravity.

It is clear, however, that much of the difficulty thrown around this subject arises from the insufficiency of our human language to state clearly what concerns spiritual

or moral things. Power, strength, ability, are terms primarily expressive of physical faculty; and cannot apply with parallel force, or corresponding sense, to the will of the spiritual soul. When the will is exercised, there is choice; and when we say that man cannot, before he is regenerate, choose the service of God, we do not mean that he is compelled to evil by a force without himself, as a stream runs downward or a flame points upward; but that he is so wicked by nature that his choice is inevitably fixed on what is wrong. He cannot do right, because he is so bent on doing wrong. Can any of us say that he is forced to sin whether he will or not? Can he say that his bondage to sin does not include his will, or that, when he sins, he is not a voluntary agent? There is no reasoning on this; we know it, in the same way that we know we exist, from our consciousness. If, then, we sin of our own accord, can we be innocent? Nay, if we are without a disposition to obey God, there can be no doubt of our guilt. It is the want of a heart to serve him for which God condemns us. The inability spoken of by the word of God and the Catechism, is nothing else than that depravity of our nature through sin by which our heart is alienated from God, our understanding blinded, and our very conscience perverted. Therefore, (in the language of the Episcopal Church,) "the condition of man after the fall, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, unto faith and calling of God."

It may be objected that the Apostle speaks of "doing the thing he would not," and our Church in the Communion service, of "sin remaining against our will in

us ;" but in those passages we must understand "would" and "will" to mean the general purpose and desire of a believer, which is for the consecration of his whole being to God.

4. The method of God in salvation justifies his condemnation of us under Adam ; for Christ takes the place of a second Adam, and holds the same federal relation to the elect, whom he represents, as the first Adam did to his natural posterity. In him the believer is justified, as in the first man he was condemned ; by the righteousness and expiation of Christ in his stead, he is pardoned, accepted, and rewarded ; the blessing comes on Christ the Head first, then on every member of the Church which is his body ; and the strength enabling him to do right is not his own, but the grace of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. It is only through such representation or suretyship of Christ that he can be saved from either the guilt or the power of sin, as the Apostle says : "For, if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they, which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

To deny the justice of representation as a principle on which God may deal with us, is to take away all hope of our salvation. Indeed, when handling the subject of the fall, we should have constant reference to the condition of sinners under the Gospel, as a remedial system, for such is our condition ; and, therefore, every other method of considering it would be more curious than practical ; since God leaves us who hear the Gospel not irrecoverably lost through Adam, but with the gracious opportunity of restoration through Christ.

In conclusion, let every believer ask himself if he does not feel that of his own nature he is utterly unable to obey God, yet that he is guilty for not obeying him ; and, at the same time, that "it is God who worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure ?" Such conviction of Christian experience is the doctrine of the Catechism.

SECONDLY : *The sentence passed upon fallen, sinful man.*

Our guilt, because of our sins, having been demonstrated, the question recurs : *Shall we be suffered to go unpunished by the good God, whom we have rebelled against ?* And the Catechism answers : "By no means ; but (he) is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins ; and will punish them in his just judgment, temporally and eternally, as he hath declared : 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'"

From the line of argument which we have chosen, much, which otherwise should come under this head, has been anticipated, yet several important things are yet to be noted : The *terms* of the condemnation ; the *reason* of it ; and its *extent*.

1. The terms of the condemnation : "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This is the language of God himself as given by the Apostle Paul out of the older Scripture. Curse is the opposite of blessing ; both imply the action of God, for he alone can curse, and he alone can bless ; blessing is the happy consequence of his favor, cursing is the miserable consequence of his anger. Sometimes

these opposite terms are applied to unconscious objects, as : "a field which the Lord hath blessed, which for that reason is fruitful; or "cursed is the ground," which for that reason brought forth thorns and thistles; yet such merely material things are not themselves properly objects of divine blessing or cursing, but only the means through which God blesses or curses man. Blessing or cursing are often restricted to particular concerns or parts of men's interests, but when used generally, or without specification, they comprehend the whole of man's being and experience; and are then synonymous with life and death in their full sense, — for the favor of God is life, and the anger of God is death. Thus Moses, having declared the law with its sanctions of reward and punishment, says : "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." So in the sentence before us, "Every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them," is denounced as "cursed," that is, condemned to death, or to all the awful effects of divine wrath; God not only withdrawing from him his favor, but also pursuing him with his vengeance. How extreme must be the misery of one whose enemy is God omnipotent!

The sentence is passed: "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." God has, it is true, "appointed a day in which he will judge the world," but his wrath does not linger until then; for the day of judgment is rather the time of the public final award to the righteous of life eternal, and to the wicked of death eternal,

at the close of the mediatorial scheme. Doubtless, there will then be a great increase of happiness on the one hand, and of misery on the other, because the sentence either way will be fully carried out, the intercession of Christ being ended; but the sentence against the sinner is already passed, and partly put in force the moment he is a sinner; nay, the only reason why it is not executed at once is the stay of divine vengeance to give opportunity of salvation through the Atoner. So the language is not "cursed will be" the sinner, but "cursed is he." "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and in the day he ate he did die; he lost the favor of God which is life, he came under the anger of God which is death; death in his body which then began to die; death in his soul which then became corrupt; death in his entire humanity, because under condemnation; death upon all the race which he represented: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned;" and again: "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." How dreadful is this thought! We are already condemned; and unless we have escaped to the shelter of Christ's mediation, the unspeakable weight of the curse of God may at any moment crush us into hell forever; all the woes we suffer now, unless they have been changed to fatherly discipline by the adopting grace of God in Christ, are but faint presaging shadows of our eternal doom.

The sentence is passed upon *all* sinners: "Cursed is every one," &c. "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin," for "there is none that doeth good, no not one." "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all

have sinned." In our mortality and moral corruption we have the proof of both our sin and our condemnation. We cannot escape on the plea that we have broken only one or a few of the divine precepts and kept the rest; even if this were possible, the sentence is against every one that continueth not *in all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them; so that to escape the curse we must not only keep all the commandments, but keep them continually, without exception and without intermission. But it is not possible; "for," says the Apostle James, "who-soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." The sin lies not merely in a particular offence, or in the breach of one particular commandment; but in rebelling against the authority of him who ordained the whole law, showing plainly that the sinner is not restrained from breaking the rest by the reverence he has for God, but only through temperament, or absence of trial, or lack of opportunity. He, who would for sound religious reasons keep one precept, would from the same conscientious motive abstain from breaking all the rest. Therefore is the sinner condemned for having rebelled against the majesty of the Lawgiver. Who, then, my hearers, can stand? Who among us has always and at all times made the law of God, because it is God's law, the rule of his conduct? Who of us can abide the scrutiny, when God searches our inmost hearts?

2. The reason of the condemnation.

God is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins.

The word God is not only the distinguishing name of the infinite Being, but also a title of his supreme office. We cannot use it rightly without understanding by it the Moral Governor, as well as the Creator of the Universe. As belief in an all-wise First Cause throws chance entirely out of the physical system, bringing all things under law; so it is impossible that the Sovereign can be indifferent to the character and acts of his moral subjects. The freedom of their agency does not put them beyond his authority, else they would become more than creatures and he less than supreme. They, therefore, must be under law, and their happiness or misery be in proportion to their conformity or lack of conformity with the divine law; so that, giving to their freedom its widest definition, it can be nothing more than freedom to work out their happiness or misery under the law of the Creator. But the law, under which they act, must spring from the very nature of God, and, as he is essentially holy, whatever in the moral creature is contrary to the divine holiness, must bring upon him the hostility of the divine power.

Again: whatever definition may be given to right, the rule of right for the moral creature can be no other than the expressed will of his divine Lord; he has, as a subject, reason to look for such a declaration of the divine will respecting his acts, (since "sin is not imputed where there is no law,") and God has revealed that law clearly to us; a transgression of the revealed law is, therefore, a rebellion against our rightful Sovereign, and the transgressor must be dealt with as a

traitor. Yet again: no man is alone in the world, nor do his actions affect only his own well being, but he belongs to a vast community of human beings, moral creatures like himself, so interlinked that their actions necessarily bear upon each other and upon their posterity; God is the Governor and Defender of the whole as he is of each, and therefore any breach of the law given to conserve the happiness of all, must be regarded by him as a grievous offence against him, because against the peace of those under his care.

Once more: all his intelligent creatures have a right to ask from God his estimate of right or wrong, the degree in which the one is meritorious, the other damnable; nor can they learn this except from the reward he attaches to obedience and the penalties he denounces against disobedience. Were he to overlook his creatures' good or evil, were he to reward lightly or punish lightly, even in a single case, the consistency of his administration would be shaken, and doubt as to the very principles of truth or happiness would darken over the universe. The dreadfulness of the curse against sin is the expression of the sense he has of its enormity, and meant to deter his subjects from it; but when any will, notwithstanding, transgress, the penalty they defy must take its course. Thus we see that God is terribly displeased with sin from the holiness of his nature, from jealous vindication of his authority, from his regard for the happiness of his subjects, and from his design to teach his moral universe the only way of life.

Sin, therefore, in any form that may be chargeable on us, must excite his severe displeasure; our actual sins not only, but, also, our sin in which we are born;

for, if the overt act be a transgression of his law, the disposition or tendency to transgression which is in our nature, must be offensive to him as the root or fountain of all sin.

As to our actual sins, the testimony of the word of God is so clear, that none of them will escape his righteous anger, as to need nothing from us, especially after our previous reasoning. But the Catechism, by our innate or born sins, ("original" as the English translator has it,) evidently means not only our native corruption, but also the sin of our first parent in whom we fell. This we shall now argue no farther than to say, upon the testimony of afore-cited Scripture, and upon the proof everywhere seen of the whole race being as a race under the curse pronounced upon Adam, that God holds us guilty because we are children of Adam, the progenitor of us all. How else, we ask again, can we account for the suffering and mortality of babes before they are capable of actual sin? Not that we can believe in the damnation of infants, as has been falsely charged on those who hold our creed; on the contrary, only we can consistently hold the doctrine of their salvation, because we believe that they are saved through the merit of Him who has said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Are we asked: What would have been their fate, if the redemption had not been provided? We answer that of such contingencies we have no knowledge, and, therefore, no right or room for conjecture, except that in no circumstances God would do unjustly. Sufficient is it for us to know that we are all condemned, all under the curse, all born in sin; and (thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!) that there is full redemption through Jesus Christ for all who believe on his name.

O my friends, how terrible must be the displeasure of God, and how base that sin which clouds with frowns against his creatures the face of him, whose names are Life and Light and Love!

3. The extent of the condemnation.

God "will punish them (our sins) in his just judgment, temporally and eternally."

The penal consequences of sin, included by the curse are temporal and eternal, on (as the answer to the next question states) both body and soul."

Man, as God created him, consists of both body and soul. His soul, having a life peculiar to itself, may exist without his body, and will so exist from the time of his so called death until the Last Day; but then it is not the entire man; neither is it the design of God that the soul should be disembodied, except for a passing purpose; nor can the soul have its full sensibility or put forth its full energy when apart from the body. God contrived the body with its faculties to be the dwelling and instrument of the soul; he created and fitted the soul (unlike angelic spirit) to live in the body and act through it. The relations of body and soul are, therefore, most intimate. As we see it in this life, the sympathy of each with the other is close and necessary. Through the bodily appetites, the soul maintains or impairs its natural vigor; through the bodily senses, it perceives and derives ideas from external things; through the bodily faculties, it acts outwardly its will; through the passions, which belong both to it and the body in combination, it enjoys or suffers. The soul, it is true, has faculties and affections peculiar to itself, and alone has will, but it has not the complete powers intended for its action without the

means and implements supplied by the body; for which reason a "spiritual body" (as the apostle characterizes it) as well as a sanctified soul is necessary to the entire felicity of man in heaven, not less than in paradise on earth; which makes the clear-sighted Paul, even while lamenting the impediments of a corrupt body, desire not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It follows, therefore, without dwelling now longer on this most interesting topic, that the punishment of sin, and the reward of righteousness as well, must be both on body and soul, or on the entire man. The body is the instrument of the soul's ungodly acts and unholy pleasures and contaminating influences, so through and in the body must the sinful soul suffer punishment; yet, as the soul has its peculiar properties which it prostitutes to sin, the punishment must also be heavy on the soul itself immediately.

This, we have seen, is the case temporally, because the curse has passed upon all men, and many specific punishments occur on every hand. Yet it should be remarked that these inflictions of divine wrath are for the most part warnings against the wrath to come, that men may repent; and that what remains of them on the believer have the curse so taken out of them as to make them parts of the divine discipline, educating his yet sinful though penitent child for the glory above.

The punishment will be eternal, upon the impenitent sinner, body and soul in this life, upon his soul after death until the Last Day, and ever after upon him body and soul, for his body will then be raised to the resurrection of damnation. The eternity or perpetuity of the sinner's punishment is plainly declared in the

word of God. Let one text out of many suffice: "These (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment." This proof is, however, objected to by some on the plea that the original word, rendered "everlasting," seldom or never in Scripture means everlasting, but only a long period. Our answer is easy and prompt, that the same word is applied in the other part of the verse to the blessedness of the righteous, "into life eternal." If the criticism were sound, the happiness of the righteous as well as the misery of the wicked will be for only a limited period. But men are immortal. Where, then, will the wicked immortal be after having passed through the age of hell? Where the immortal righteous, after the age of heaven? Where the immortal soul, when heaven and hell are both past? The objection is absurd.

Besides, if, as has been shown, the natural effects of sin are misery, and the justice of God requires the punishment of the sinner, those consequences, natural and penal, must remain upon the sinner so long as he continues to be a sinner, every moment of his sinfulness working out fresh misery and provoking anew the wrath of the Judge. But the Scriptures teach us that there is no repentance after death, and that with death all opportunities of God's converting grace are closed; wherefore it must be that the impenitent soul will grow worse from the downward tendency of sin, and so his misery increase constantly forever. Let us, then, dear friends, hasten while we may to flee from the wrath to come, for there is no escape across the gulf which God has fixed between hell and heaven! "To-day, if 'we' will hear his voice, let us not harden our hearts," lest he "swear" unto us in his "wrath: Ye shall not see my rest."

THIRDLY: *The certainty that the sentence will be executed.*

After the previous reasoning, but one objection to the doctrine of the sinner's punishment remains for us to answer, which is, that God is merciful, and, therefore, will not be so severe against his human creatures, even though they have broken his law. The reply of the Catechism is ours: "God, is, indeed merciful, but also just: therefore his justice requires that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, everlasting punishment both of body and soul."

That God is merciful, we rejoice in knowing from countless passages of Scripture, but those which assert his justice are scarcely less numerous. His justice demands that sin, every sin, against his law should be followed with appropriate punishment. His law has been proclaimed with its penalty of curse, and so the punishment is now demanded by the truth of God. Sin is an offence not only against God himself as our Creator and owner, but also against him as the most high Sovereign of the universe, whose office is to teach all his intelligent subjects what is the way of right and the consequences of keeping or departing from it; but also to defend and vindicate them from the evil of sin by which the disobedient may assail the welfare of the faithful. It is clear, therefore, that his mercy, when exercised, must be consistent with his justice, and in no case can remit the punishment of sin. If by mercy is meant mere pity for the transgressor, which allows him to escape the righteous sentence against him, it would be a weakness utterly inconsistent with the perfection of God; for where, then, would be the force of his law,

where the consistency of his administration, where the knowledge of his wrath against sin? What should we think of a human sovereign, presiding over a considerable community, if he should cease to execute, or irregularly execute, the laws out of pity for the offenders? Should we not say that he was unfit to govern, that his mis-called mercy to the criminal was cruelty to the many, because encouraging crime by the prospect of impunity; and that if such a course were continued, it would end in anarchy and utter ruin? Would this be less true on the enlarged scale of the divine dominion? So long as we attribute to God the moral government of the universe, we must believe that so principal a part of executive sovereignty as the punishment of offences against organic law will be faithfully administered. If God punish not wrong, where shall we look for the vindication of right?

God is merciful, but his mercy cannot contradict his justice. There must, therefore, be a method by which the divine mercy is justified, and the divine justice administered through mercy. This is the purpose and end of the redemption through Christ, the delightful doctrines of which it will be our privilege to consider on the subsequent Lord's Days. There we may see that, though "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," all who believe are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Yes, beloved breth-

ren, here is our hope: "Cursed," indeed, "is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; but Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Death by Adam, life by Christ; lost ourselves, redeemed by Jesus; guilty through our own sin, justified by the righteousness of Him in whom we have believed. God grant us all this faith, that we may not perish, but have everlasting life! Amen.

LECTURE V.

NECESSITY OF A MEDIATOR.

VOL. I.

7

FIFTH LORD'S DAY.

NECESSITY OF A MEDIATOR.

QUEST. XII. *Since, then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?*

ANS. God will have his justice satisfied; and, therefore, we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another.

QUEST. XIII. *Can we ourselves, then, make this satisfaction?*

ANS. By no means; but, on the contrary, we daily increase our debt.

QUEST. XIV. *Can there be found anywhere one who is a mere creature able to satisfy for us?*

ANS. None; for, first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man has committed; and, further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it.

QUEST. XV. *What sort of a mediator and deliverer, then, must we seek for?*

ANS. For one who is very man and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also very God.

HITHERTO our meditations on the Catechism have been sad and bitter, though, I trust, not unprofitable or without glimpses of comfort. The shadows of the curse have been heavy, yet the morning light of the Sun of Righteousness has gilded the horizon. It is the method of Christ's Spirit thus to humble that he may exalt us, and, by convincing us of our guilt, to prepare us for hearing with great joy the glad tidings of salvation; nor could we understand how we may be saved through the representative righteousness of Christ, did we not first see our ruin through the fall of our first father. "The law" is "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we" may "be justified by faith." Blessed be God, that when our sense of eternal danger

makes us cry out: What must we do to be saved? He has himself given us the answer by his only begotten Son, our Elder Brother! Yea, blessed be his holy name, that he honors sinful men with the happy office of proclaiming the full and free salvation to their fellow-sinners! O that his grace would strengthen me, his most unworthy servant, this day and at all times of my ministry, to make known the methods of his mercy so clearly that all of you, my dear hearers, may by the same Spirit be comforted and built up in the faith of Jesus Christ, the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!"

Hereto assist us, the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Having shown us our condemnation under the curse denounced against sinners, the Catechism leads us to ask if there be any way of deliverance from the irresistible wrath of God, and gives a gleam of hope in the answer to Question the 12th. "God will have his justice satisfied; and, therefore, we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves or by another."

If, then, we may escape through a full satisfaction, for the dishonor we have done to the holy law of God, can we ourselves make such a satisfaction? This is declared to be impossible, in the answer to Question the 13th. "By no means; but, on the contrary, we daily increase our debt."

But if we look for help to the creatures of God, is there any one of them all who could make such satisfaction for us? The Catechism replies, in the answer to Question the 14th, "None; for, first: God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man hath committed; and, further: no mere creature can sustain

the burden of God's eternal wrath, so as to deliver others from it."

Thus denied all hope from mere creatures, what kind of a surety must we look for? Ans. 15th. "For one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also very God."

This is our lesson proper for to-day; but if you glance over that of the Sixth Lord's Day, you will see the doctrines of the 14th and 15th Questions and answers there more thoroughly opened, for which reason we shall now touch them but lightly, giving our attention chiefly to the 12th and 13th, comprising, however, the treatment of the whole doctrine in both Lord's Days under the following heads:

FIRST: *The impossibility of our salvation by our own works.*

SECONDLY: *The possibility of our salvation through the righteousness of a sufficient substitute.*

THIRDLY: *The qualities necessary to a sufficient substitute, or mediator, for us with God.*

FOURTHLY: *The provision of such a substitute, or mediator, in our Lord Jesus Christ, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.*

FIRST: *The impossibility of our salvation by our own good works.*

This is taught us, according to Scripture, in the 12th and 13th Questions and answers: 1. "God will have his justice satisfied." 2. "We cannot," of ourselves, make such satisfaction, "but, on the contrary, we daily increase our debt."

1. "God will have his justice satisfied." This, you will remember, we argued at length in our lecture on

the Fourth Lord's Day, when treating of the 10th and 11th Questions and answers; but we may, not unprofitably, repeat the main points.

a. The *truth* of God demands it; for he has expressly and repeatedly declared that "the soul which sinneth, it shall die;" "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"; and that he "will by no means clear the guilty." It cannot, for a moment, be supposed that God will deny himself. What he has said, he will execute. Whatever sophisms the carnal heart may invent, "let God be true and every man a liar."

b. The *holiness* of God demands it; for there is such a contrariety in sin to his own purity that he cannot look upon the sinner without abhorrence; and, as his infinite blessedness results from his infinite holiness, it must be that the result of sin will be misery.

c. The *authority* of God demands it; for if, as the Supreme Ruler, he has promulgated his law, and one of his subjects break that law, he is defied to his face, and, should he not execute the penalty incurred, the transgressor will seem to triumph, and the divine rule cease to be infallible, giving encouragement and immunity to sin.

d. The *care of God for the welfare of his subject-creatures* demands it; since his law was given to guard the happiness of each from the injurious encroachment or remissness of any, and sin is a positive and wide-spreading injury, any tolerance of sin on his part would be to allow of wrong being done by the sinner against his fellow-subjects, who should have the divine protection.

e. The *moral instruction of God's rational subjects*

demands it; for, only from his revelation of his will in his word and works can we know what he requires of us, the distinction in his sight between right and wrong, and the estimate he sets upon righteousness and upon wrong-doing. If, therefore, he allow sin to pass without punishing the sinner, how can we or any observer of his doings know the way of right and reward from the way of wrong and punishment?

Thus we see that the escape of a single sinner from punishment, though he may have committed but a single sin, would cause a fatal doubt of the divine truth, of the divine holiness, of the divine authority, of the divine goodness, and of the divine will. Truly, therefore, asserts the Catechism: "God will have his justice satisfied," and until that satisfaction be rendered, we cannot escape punishment. As certainly as God is unchangeable, the unjustified sinner must die.

2. "We cannot, of ourselves, make satisfaction to the divine justice; but, on the contrary, we daily increase our debt."

Debt, though now commonly used for pecuniary obligation, really signifies that which is due, whatever it be. Our debt to God is twofold: The penalty we have incurred, and the constant obedience required; both the discharge of that penalty, and the rendering of that obedience, are necessary to the satisfaction of the law to which we are subject; but in neither part can we render satisfaction to divine justice.

a. Not by discharging the penalty. For, as has been shown, the guilt of man, that is, his desert of punishment, God considers so great that no suffering of man can ever expiate it, and hence his punishment will be so long as any guilt of his remains; which, conse-

quently, if man be left to himself, will be perpetual or eternal. We should be continually enduring punishment, but never finishing the payment of the penalty; and our expiation, being ever imperfect, would be prolonged forever.

But some may ask: Will not God allow us to atone for our past offences by future obedience, or, in other words, make up for past transgressions by our repentance and faithful service after this? The answer must be in the negative. When a penalty has been deserved it must be suffered. No remorse can destroy the sinful act done or its consequences. The law has been broken, the authority of God has been insulted, the evil against our fellow-creatures has been wrought, the sentence has been pronounced; no regrets can annihilate the past. Is it not so under human law? Is remorse ever considered an expiation of crime, or accepted in lieu of the penalty? The thief goes to prison, the murderer to the gallows, though they weep never so bitterly or promise never so well. Sometimes, indeed, the penalty may be mitigated, but it would be only because the moral sensibility displayed by the culprit shows that his guilt was less, not that his tears had washed it away. Is it not so under God's natural laws? Can the remorse of the sensualist repair the peace he has destroyed? or the tears of the drunkard restore to him the health and vigor he has wasted? And shall a few pangs of the sinner's soul, caused rather by dread of suffering than honest sorrow for crime, suffice to hide from the holy God all trace of his offences against wise, good, and just law? Let it once be admitted as a principle, that sorrow for sin atones for it, and the value of law is at an end. Again: The

law of God is so broad that it requires all our service at all times. Every thought, every word, every act, every moment of our lives belong to God. All our mind, all our heart, all our soul, all our might, belong to God. We cannot, without sin, alienate our strength for a single moment from the duty which belongs to that moment. If, therefore, we have at any time failed to render an entire obedience, we can never compensate for it; because, even though we should afterward render an entire obedience, it is no more than what we owe to God at the time, and there can be no excess or surplus of service which may be put to the supply of the former deficiency. This principle is acknowledged in the administration of human laws; for they, requiring good conduct at all times, admit no previous or subsequent virtue as an expiation of crime. Though a man be honest all the rest of his life, if he, in any one moment, steal, he is punished as a thief; if he commit but one murder, he is executed. The penalty may sometimes, through a merciful policy, be mitigated, but can never, in strict justice, be remitted.

b. Neither can we satisfy divine justice by a constant obedience; which is the other part of the debt we owe to God. Granting, for the sake of argument, that all the penal consequences of our past sins were removed from us, and we were allowed to begin anew our probation, we could not, if left to ourselves and our present nature, satisfy the requirements of the divine law, but, "on the contrary," should "daily increase our debt;" for, as has been shown in our previous lessons (particularly on the Second and Third Lord's Days), the natural consequence of sin is the depravity of our moral disposition and faculties, so that we are from

our very birth "wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness," "except we be regenerated by the Spirit of God." Upon this depravity of our nature we have already argued so fully that no farther proof need be adduced. It is clearly a doctrine of all Scripture, especially that which declares, on the one hand, that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, and, on the other, that sincere repentance and its fruits of a Christian life are wrought in the believer by the grace of the Holy Spirit, converting and sanctifying his soul. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit is bestowed only upon those who by faith receive Christ as their Saviour because the Saviour of sinners. If reformation does occur, it is only through the operation of faith in the Gospel which reveals the atonement, and is, therefore, consequent on the atonement. Even then the reformation is never complete in this life, and the more a penitent receives of divine grace, the more is he convinced that "it is God who worketh in" him "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Without the Spirit of Christ we are utterly unable to render any of that service which the law requires for our justification; and if we be regenerated so that we lead good lives, the credit is due, not to us for our justification, but to him, whose is the only righteousness which God will accept as sufficient to honor the law under which we live and by which we shall be tried.

Thus we see that in no sense are we able to satisfy for ourselves the justice of God, but are daily increasing our debt, and heaping up for ourselves wrath against the day of wrath. Such would be our miserable condition in this world, and such our terrible fate in the

world to come, were there no method provided for our salvation, other than that originally proposed to man: our personal innocence and obedience. But, blessed be God, we are not so cut off from hope; for we learn:

SECONDLY: *The possibility of our salvation through the righteousness of a sufficient substitute.*

"God will have his justice satisfied, and, therefore, we must make this full satisfaction either by ourselves or by another." (Ans. 12th.)

The necessity of satisfaction having been shown, and, also that we cannot make it of ourselves, a new question arises: *Will God accept of satisfaction rendered for us by another?*

The whole evangelical Scriptures, and our Church in all her confessions according to Scripture, answer: Yes. We freely admit that no such method of salvation could have been discovered by the reason of men; but contend that, having been revealed to us by God himself, the infinitely wise and holy Sovereign, it is perfectly consonant with the highest reason.

1. God has declared that the righteousness of Christ, when accepted by the faith of the sinner as offered on his behalf, is accepted as a sufficient ground of his justification; as says the apostle: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." This puts beyond doubt the fact,

that God does justify the believing sinner on the ground that a sufficient righteousness has been offered on his behalf by another. We may not, therefore, deny the propriety of such an arrangement without impeaching the justice of God. But,

2. It is also perfectly consonant with sound reason. The design of God in the denunciation of penalties on the breaking of his law, certainly was not the destruction of his subjects, but to maintain the divine authority of his law and to deter man from transgression. Now, if by the provision of a sufficient substitute for the sinner, three things can be secured, God is just in receiving the sinner again into favor. Those three things are: *a.* The honor of the divine law. *b.* The maintenance of the divine authority, so that no encouragement is given that sin will go unpunished. *c.* The reformation of the transgressor, so that he returns to obedience.

a. For the first: The honor of the divine law; it is necessary that God should show his infinite estimation of its excellence. This is done by the perfect submission and obedience to the law of the sufficient Surety, that in the greatness of his service, the dishonor which we have done the law may be covered by a transcendent glory. And what greater honor could God have given to his law than by sending forth his only begotten and coequal Son to become in our nature its faithful servant, and obey all its requisitions, actual and penal, on our behalf? Must not the spectacle of the divine Lawgiver himself condescending to fulfil all its demands as a voluntary servant, yield in the sight of all holy creatures a testimony to its excellence and invest it with a glory infinitely higher and more con-

vincing than the obedience of our whole race, or of myriads of worlds like ours?

b. For the second: The maintenance of the divine authority; it is necessary that God sternly require the penalties which we have incurred to be fully endured by a sufficient Surety, in such a manner as will show beyond a doubt the displeasure of God against sin and his determination not to allow it to go unpunished. And how could God more plainly indicate his just will that no sin shall be tolerated with impunity, and display his deep abhorrence of transgression, than by requiring the penalties which we have incurred to the uttermost from his own beloved Son, when incarnate as our representative? Could the eternal suffering of all our race, of myriads of worlds like ours, exhibit the divine wrath against the sinner, in any degree approaching the terrible anguish of body and soul which the innocent holy Jesus endured under the displeasure of the Father?

c. For the third: The reformation of the sinner who is pardoned on account of the substituted righteousness, so that he returns to obedience; it is necessary that the same grace which pardons should inspire him with a new life, with desire, and strength to keep the law he before has broken; else the pardon would be to let loose a rebel unsubdued, and an evil-doer unreclaimed. And how wisely and certainly has God secured the repentance and sanctification of the ransomed transgressor, by making the same faith which admits him to a discharge from condemnation effectual, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, to purify his heart, to work in him love, and to strengthen him for overcoming the world. For Christ saves none from wrath whom he does not save

from the power of sin ; none have the grace of faith without the grace of repentance ; none have a part in Christ who do not receive the Holy Ghost to dwell in their souls ; and none are admitted to heaven without being first made holy and pure. Where can be found such generous and persuasive arguments to cease from sinning and do the will of God, as are forced upon the soul by the mercy of God through the devoted love of Christ ? Who, that has a heart at all sensitive to grateful emotion, would wilfully insult his deliverer that died for him ? How are we encouraged, notwithstanding our weakness, and the pressure of temptation from within and without, to attempt the difficult path of duty, when we are assured that God, for Christ's sake, will work in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure ;" that all power is in the hand of Christ to overrule all circumstances for the safety of his people ; and that heaven, with all its benedictions and felicities, is before us as an eternal recompense for our brief trials, an exceedingly glorious reward of our perseverance in the footsteps of Christ ?

While presenting to you this condensed argument for the vindication of divine justice in redeeming the penitent sinner, we should be far from the thought that we have all the divine reasons for such an arrangement. There are depths in the divine purposes which no created mind can fathom, as there is a range of the divine operations which no created mind can comprehend. Divine truth, so far as it is revealed to us here in our present state, must be communicated through the medium of human language, which has been framed (a very few words excepted) with reference only to things of this world, and all illustrations of the divine

working must be taken from facts of which we are conversant. Thus, the Scriptures (and our Church according to the Scriptures) exemplify the juridical proceedings of our divine Sovereign by the methods of human jurisdiction ; borrowing from them its terms, as debt, penalty, guilt, pardon, justification, atonement, and the like ; or, at the farthest, we look for explanations to what we can discover of the divine administration in providence over this present economy. But what is the narrow sphere of this little world, so petty a province considered by itself, to the vast empire over which our God sways his sovereignty ? What is the brief time of the earth's few ages to the eternity past and future, through which the omniscient purposes of God are carried on by the mighty working of his omnipresent will ? What is the aggregated fortune of all our race, if separated from the rest of the spiritual creation, to the moral well-being of the countless families, who depend on our God for all that constitutes the life of life ? Of what we can discover respecting God's dealings here and among men, though we push our inquiries to the utmost limit, we must say with the adoring patriarch : "Lo ! these are parts of his ways ; but how small a portion is heard of him ?" The full doctrine, or, if the expression be allowed, the complete theory of the atonement ; the reasons for its methods ; the extent of its purposes ; the variety of its results ; the number and character and condition of the moral beings that are and are to be affected by its consequences, can be understood only by the Infinite Author of the scheme. There must, after all our study and reasoning out of the Scripture and the analogies of providence, remain mysteries in the plan of

salvation utterly above our reach; and our best illustrations fall infinitely short of the vast idea.

Suppose, for example, that the Allwise Father were himself teaching his heavenly servants the doctrine of the redemption provided for man, would he employ the terms and the analogies with which the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures condescends to teach us? Must we not believe that he would uplift the attention of those apt, long-disciplined intelligences to great principles of the divine government, but partially revealed to us because we are capable only of partially understanding them?

We cheerfully and with devout reverence admit, nay, would earnestly contend, that the principles of the divine government on which the atonement is based, as it is revealed to us, must be the same throughout all its extent — and, especially, that main principle of justification for the believing penitents of our human race through the substituted obedience and suffering of the Son of God in our nature as our representative; but what we mean to assert is, that that very principle is and can be only partially, very partially understood by us even through the revelation God has given of it to us, because from the condition we are in, the revelation must be confined within comparatively narrow limits. Thus the Apostle Paul speaks of “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and of “the love of Christ which passeth knowledge;” and again with the same reference he exclaims: “O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!”

This is certain, the testimony of Scripture being so clear as to allow no doubt, that the influence of the plan of redemption extends far beyond the Church

which it translates from the depth of condemnation to the height of heavenly glory; nay, we may believe that the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness sheds fresh magnificence over all the spiritual universe of God's creation. The Apostle Peter declares that “the angels desire to look into the things of redemption;” and Paul that “principalities and powers in heavenly places” will be taught and are now taught “by the church (that is, by God's dealings with the church) the manifold wisdom of God.” Jesus is declared to be the observed “(seen) of angels;” and the Lamb that was slain will be eternally in the midst of the throne; the eternal object of admiration, adoration, and praise to all the angelic hosts, who will alternate their responsive hallelujahs with glorified believers, and join with them in the unanimous, unending choruses of acclaiming homage before the throne of God and his Christ. What the effects of the evangelical scheme on other worlds may be, we know not and dare not conjecture; but this we are certain of, that it reveals to all his holy creatures who contemplate the divine character, its very highest glory, his most manifold wisdom and love and power. It is “to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

God has manifested the glory of his majestic attributes in many ways, some of which we know, but more of which we cannot understand; yet it may without irreverence be asserted, that were it not for the shining of his glory in the face of his Son Jesus Christ, the full beauty and the most attractive charm of his infinite love would not be known. His holy servants would forever have adored his several excellences, but could not have perceived their admirable harmony as

now they behold his wisdom devising and his power executing the wonderful plan of salvation for the sinner, in which justice and goodness combine to reveal mercy. The justice of God, had it taken its unqualified course in punishing the sinner, — the goodness of God, had its bounties been confined only to the deserving and guiltless, — would indeed, have received and been worthy of all praise from all holy creatures. Still those most glorious attributes are naturally essential to the divine Sovereign ; we could not imagine the Holy Father of intelligent creatures otherwise than just and good. The exercise of those divine qualities is necessary to the idea of God ; but that they could meet in blessing on the souls of guilty sinners, no created mind could ever have conjectured or believed to be possible had not God made it manifest. His mercy surprises and startles the moral universe with a mild and exquisite glory, transcending all other emanations from the light unapproachable in which the mystery of his being dwells. It is brighter than justice, softer than goodness ; for it is justice and goodness blending their beams in mercy, — his choice, his delight, the good pleasure of his sovereign will.

Now, dear hearers, let us learn and carry away with us the practical inferences, from the doctrine thus far developed.

FIRST: Our utter helplessness under our deserved condemnation.

God will have his justice satisfied. Who of us can escape from his hands, or bear the fiery vengeance of his curse? O, vain and impious is the expectation of the sinner from the goodness or pity of God, while his

justice with flaming sword stands between to execute the sentence of the law.

SECONDLY: Our certain salvation, if, with penitent hearts, we accept of the suretyship of Christ.

It is the method God has provided, because he delights to save. It is the method which magnifies his justice infinitely more than our eternal death. It is the method by which we may be transformed from deep corruption into holy servants of his will forever.

THIRDLY: Our gracious obligation to spread the knowledge of this mercy among our fellow-sinners, for their immortal good ; the joy of angels ; our own reward, and the glory of God our Saviour.

LECTURE VI.

QUALITIES OF THE MEDIATOR.

SIXTH LORD'S DAY.

QUALITIES OF THE MEDIATOR.

QUEST. XVI. *Why must he be very man, and yet perfectly righteous?*

ANS. Because the justice of God requires that the same nature which hath sinned, should likewise make satisfaction for sin; and one who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others.

QUEST. XVII. *Why must he in one person be also very God?*

ANS. That he might by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature, the burden of God's wrath; and might obtain for, and restore to us righteousness and life.

QUEST. XVIII. *Who is, then, that Mediator, who is in one person both very God and real righteous man?*

ANS. Our Lord Jesus Christ; who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.

QUEST. XIX. *Whence knowest thou this?*

ANS. From the holy Gospel which God himself revealed first in Paradise, and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and was pleased to represent it by the shadows of sacrifices and the other shadows of the law; and, lastly, has accomplished it by his only begotten Son.

THE lesson for the Fifth Lord's Day set forth in the 12th Question and answer: The necessity of a satisfaction being made for our sins in order to our salvation; in the 13th: Our utter inability to make such satisfaction for ourselves; and in the 14th: The insufficiency of any mere creature to make satisfaction for us; which led to the 15th Question: What sort of Mediator and Deliverer must we then seek for? The answer given to which, is: "For one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also very God."

But those who were attentive to our lecture on the Fifth Lord's Day will remember the statement, — that

the doctrine of the Mediator between God and man, which is opened in the 14th and 15th questions and answers, is more thoroughly discussed throughout those for the Sixth Lord's Day; and that, therefore, for greater convenience, it was proposed to consider the whole subject under four heads:—

FIRST: *The impossibility of our salvation by our own works.*

SECONDLY: *The possibility of our salvation by or through the righteousness of a sufficient substitute.*

THIRDLY: *The qualities necessary to a sufficient substitute or mediator for us with God.*

FOURTHLY: *The provision of such a substitute or mediator in our Lord Jesus Christ, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.*

The first two of these heads were then discussed at considerable length, leaving the third and fourth for discussion to-day; which, imploring divine help, we shall now pursue.

THIRDLY: *The qualities necessary to a sufficient substitute or mediator for us with God.*

The answer to the 14th Question denies that he may be "a mere creature," because, "first: God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man has committed; and, further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it." The answer to the 15th Question asserts that "our Mediator and Deliverer" must be: "One who is very man, and yet perfectly righteous, and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is, also, very God."

He must be "very man, and yet perfectly righteous," says the answer to the 16th Question: "Because

the justice of God requires, that the same nature which hath sinned should likewise (*i. e.* also) make satisfaction for sin; and one who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others." He "must also in one person be very God," says the answer to the 17th Question: "That he might, by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature the burden of God's wrath; and might obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life."

This instruction of the Catechism is so full and clear as to render any prolonged commentary of ours needless; yet some more specific explanations may not be without use; and they will be given under two propositions:—

I. The Substitute and Mediator must be "very (or truly) man, and perfectly righteous."

II. He must "also be very God in one person" with his human nature.

I. He must be "very man, and perfectly righteous."

1. No other mere creature can be accepted as a substitute for man.

A. "God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man has committed."

a. God would not compel any other creature to suffer for man's sin. If that creature be himself a sinner, he must suffer the punishment of his own sin, which he can never sufficiently expiate; and, therefore, no sufferings of his can be put to the credit of the sinner of another nature. There are various ranks of spiritual creatures, and we have reason to believe that among the angels who have fallen there are some of very high rank originally; but according to their original height has been the depth of their fall; according to the emi-

nence of their duties has been the guilt of their rebellion. They suffer for themselves; they cannot be made to suffer more than they deserve; nor, if that were possible, would the infliction of any additional sufferings on them for man's sake be just to them, or give any honor to the law which man has broken. Neither, if the other creature be innocent, would it be just to impose upon him sufferings which he does not deserve, that man might be relieved from sufferings which he does deserve. The authority of God could never be vindicated by such treatment of a creature who is entitled to reward for his obedience.

b. Nor, again, may such a creature, however highly exalted, voluntarily assume the place of man, either to endure man's punishment for the sins he has committed, or to perform the duties which he has omitted, both being necessary to the satisfaction demanded. For every creature, from the fact of his creation, is a servant of God, bound to use all his faculties with the utmost energy of which he is capable in the sphere where God has placed him, and can never do more than his duty. To take man's place, therefore, he must desert his own; to endure man's punishment, to perform man's duties, he must use faculties and time which already belong to God. The just authority of God would be aggrieved, not honored, by the disobedience of an angel to the law under which he is placed, that he might obey the law under which man is placed. A creature of God cannot change his sphere of duty any more than he can change his nature, for they are by the divine appointment necessarily relative to each other, not matters of the creature's choice, but absolutely of the divine will.

B. "Further: no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's wrath against sin so as to deliver others from it."

Even if it were possible that another mere creature, however holy and exalted, could take our place, no amount of suffering on his part would be sufficient to make up for the sufferings we need to be released from.

a. The punishment appointed to the sinner is everlasting, because he can never, by any sufferings he is capable of, exhaust the penalty. Yet the distance in dignity between any other creature and man is, of necessity, limited; how, then, can our punishment, which is unlimited, be substituted by any sufferings of his short of eternal? The substitution, if undertaken, can never be accomplished.

b. Besides: the sinners to be redeemed are a great multitude, whom no man can number, and the substitute would have to bear in his single person the aggregate responsibility of them all; if, then, the punishment of one sinner be so heavy that he cannot exhaust it, but must suffer on forever, what mere creature could endure the imputed sufferings of the whole Church? A proper idea of the atonement will not tolerate for an instant the substitution of a mere creature to satisfy the wrath of God which we deserve.

2. The character of our responsibility is such that it cannot be assumed except by one in human nature, yet himself guiltless.

A. "The justice of God requires that the same human nature which hath sinned, should likewise make satisfaction for sin." (16th Ans.)

Even were another creature found capable of enduring the weight of our punishment, the circumstances of

our sin are such that he could not assume its guilt or render a satisfactory obedience on our behalf; for—

a. The law which has been outraged was given to man, was adapted to his nature, and ordered for his sphere of service. Righteousness, it is true, must be ever and everywhere the same in its essential qualities. The same great principles of right must rule over all the subjects of God; yet, as the natures of those subjects are various, and different theatres of action are assigned to their different natures, it follows, that the manner in which the obedience is to be rendered must be peculiar to each class. The service demanded of a pure spirit, which has been created to live without a body, must be different from that demanded of a spirit created to live in a body; for example, the service of angelic spirit from that of a human being. Take the ten precepts of the law given to man, and you see that there are human duties which a holy angel cannot perform, as there are offences which a wicked angel cannot commit. Even one class of angels or unembodied spirits may have duties assigned them for which they are fitted, differing from those for which other classes of angels are fitted, each class being under its peculiar law, within its peculiar sphere, beyond which it cannot go. How much less can an angel, or unembodied spirit, come under the peculiar obligations of man? The law, given to man for his obedience on earth, can be obeyed or satisfied only by human nature on earth, or in man's proper sphere. That law, imposed by the Creator on human nature, to be obeyed in his body on earth, man has broken; and the earth is full of his rebellion. Whatever laws, therefore, are obeyed, if the law given to man remain dishonored, the government

of God is shaken. Whatever classes of his moral creatures are faithful, if man be a successful, unpunished sinner, the justice of God is uncertain. Whatever provinces of his empire are loyal and tributary, if in this world his authority be not vindicated, it ceases to be sovereign. Whatever decrees of his will are fulfilled, if the sentence against sinful man be not executed, his truth has failed. The satisfaction necessary for our safety must, therefore, we repeat, be made to the law appointed for us, in our nature and upon our earth. So we read that: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

b. The penalties denounced against sin are of such a nature that none but man can endure them so as to free us from guilt. The sentence pronounced on man is death,—death of body, and death of soul,—which we know includes all the sicknesses, pains, and corruption of the body, with all the sorrow, anguish, and degradation of spirit which is occasioned by the withdrawal of God's favor and the weight of his wrath. This death of our entire human nature, temporal and eternal, is the punishment we deserve and must suffer, except we be delivered from it by a sufficient satisfaction rendered for us. None but man can know and feel the sorrows and agony of man in body and soul; none but man can suffer the pains and distresses of our mortal life, or our eternal death, the death "passed upon all men because that all have sinned." So we read of our Redeemer: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver

them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For, verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people."

There are other and most important reasons why the Mediator should be very man, which we may not now enter upon, but hope to consider fully when they are brought before us by subsequent sections of the Catechism. Yet we may ask: How may sinful man dare approach unto God; how may he know that God will again dwell with men; that his fallen nature may again enjoy the felicity of his presence and the light of his love, unless he saw one made in the likeness of his own sinful flesh holding intimate communion with God, glorious himself from communications of the divine glory, and standing before us as the medium through whom we may look upon God and not die,—unless God be again with man on earth, as he was once in Paradise, speaking to man as to his dear child?

B. The Mediator in our human nature must be "perfectly righteous," because "one who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others." This point is so clearly stated, that no argument of ours is needed to make it clearer; but it is stated so distinctly to prepare us for faith in him who has been constituted by God as our Mediator and Substitute. The perfect righteousness of the man who is our surety must be twofold; innocence and active obedience.

a. Innocence.—He must be without sin. If he had committed sin, his own guilt would be upon him; and

he would be rejected by God in his own person, much more as a mediator for his fellow-sinners. So we read of our Lord and Saviour, that "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

b. Active Obedience.—The satisfaction for us required by God, is not merely a sufficient suffering in room of that which we deserve on account of our transgression, but an honoring of the law by an active obedience sufficient to be substituted in room of that which we are bound to render, and which is necessary, according to the divine justice, for our re-admission within the divine favor, vouchsafed only to those who are righteous in his sight. Such positive, energetic righteousness, no sinner, whose faculties have been depraved by the corruption of human nature consequent upon the fall, can render. "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The inference from this is, that the mediator or substitute we need must be man, partaker of all other human characteristics, but not of sin; and, therefore, as all our race are fallen in Adam, guilty of overt, personal sins, and utterly without moral strength to honor God by keeping his law, the mediator or substitute for us in human nature, must be man after some extraordinary method which excepts him from the otherwise universal entailment of guilt and corruption, while he inherits all our weaknesses which are not sinful. Our guilt and corruption are derived from Adam in the same manner that our being is derived from him; "Adam begat his 'children' in his own likeness;" we are "conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity;" that cannot be human nature, which is not born of woman;

that cannot be sinless human nature which is begotten by man; hence, our surety in human nature must be conceived from some "extraordinary generation," conceived without sin, brought forth without iniquity, yet, because his flesh and blood are derived from woman, having the physical weaknesses of humanity, being subject to all those infirmities, but without sin. So we read of our Lord's miraculous conception, in the words of the angel to the Virgin Mary (Let "all generations call her blessed!") "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The germ of the body was in the woman, and in her womb it grew till its birth, and from her bosom was it nourished after its birth, but the impregnating power was of God, and, therefore, was the flesh and blood of the "child wonderful" holy; of the seed of Adam, Abraham, Judah, and David, through his mother, but sanctified in the first beginning of his human nature by the energy of the Holy Ghost.

II. Our Mediator and Substitute "must also be very God in one person" with his human nature.

For this two reasons are given by the Catechism (17th Ans.)

"That he might by the power of his Godhead sustain in his human nature the burden of God's wrath;" and

"Might obtain for and restore us to righteousness and life."

1. "That he might, by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature the burden of God's wrath."

A. Because the burden of God's wrath is too great for human nature, unsupported, to endure.

It is the wrath of God against the sinner. The sentence denounced against the sinner is death, which we have seen to be the utter withdrawal of the divine favor and the actual infliction of his vengeance. The moment that this sentence comes upon the sinner in its full execution, he must be crushed—he must die. There can be in him no vital energy left, no recuperative force—the weight presses him down forever. The substitute must be man, because it is the penalty of the law given to man. But if he were mere man, though himself righteous, the weight of the imputed guilt of a single sinner would crush him in death forever. He could never react from under it; his power would be lost; he would be dead. Nor could the strength of any creature avail for his help in so extreme an emergency. How, then, shall the one mediator be enabled to sustain the otherwise intolerable burden? All the wit of men and angels could never resolve the difficulty; we must go for our answer to the revelation of the Gospel. "God" is there "manifest in the flesh." Man still stands forth the substitute of man, to receive upon his head the terrible curse; one person is still to meet it alone; but that Person is not merely man; by an ineffable mystery, the coequal Son of God assumes that humanity to himself, so that the Son of God and the son of the woman, very God and very man, their natures still distinct, yet in their distinctness united, constitute one Person, the Substitute of the sinner. The Son of God thus makes the human nature of the Son of man his own. The wrath divine comes not on the Son of God, for divinity can in no sense suf-

fer or be put to shame; it falls on the human nature alone, because the justice of God requires that the nature, which has sinned, should bear the penalty of the sin; but the divinity in the person of the mediator sustains by its almightiness the humanity in the person of the mediator to bear up under the curse, and, while fully satisfying the wrath of God, yet to retain a vital energy sufficient for its recovery from the imputed death. The human nature alone endures, but endures by the strength of the divine, to which it is personally associated. Thus, the apostle speaks of the "Church of God which he hath redeemed by *his own blood*;" *i. e.* by the blood of the human nature which through his incarnation he made "his own." "God sent forth his Son" (elsewhere called his only begotten Son, therefore Divine, as the begotten is of the nature of the begetter) — his Son must have existed before he sent him forth — sent forth his preëxistent Son "made of a woman," that is, united to the Son of man as the Saviour of sinners. So again, we read, that Christ Jesus, "being in the form of God (*i. e. existing as God*) thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to (until) death, even the death of the cross." Great as must have been the wrath of God which came on the human nature of our Substitute, the strength of God could enable that human nature to bear it.

B. Because the merit of no suffering endured by a mere man would be sufficient for the redemption of the Church, saved through the Mediator.

If the wrath of God against a single sinner be so intolerable, how could a single man, as their substitute, sustain the wrath due to such a multitude?

A ready answer is, that the divine strength of the Immanuel could uphold his human nature under any degree of penal suffering; but the reply goes not far enough, for it will be asked again, Upon what principle of justice can one man be accepted in the room of many? If he be a mere man, how can the divine law be magnified by his suffering, let him suffer never so much, so that many sinners may escape by his substitution? It is obvious that where one stands forth as a substitute for very many, he cannot be accepted unless he has in his single person a dignity, or worth, far excelling that of a private individual man, and commensurate to the vast representativeness which he would assume. It is true, that by one man, Adam, condemnation to death came on our whole race; but Adam acted not merely as a private individual; nor became he man by ordinary generation; he was created immediately by God, so that the sacred genealogist hesitates not to call him "the Son of God" ("Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God," Luke iii. 38); and, deriving his nature in this extraordinary way, he was constituted in the dignity of head of his race. He could justly represent all human nature, because all human nature was in him. All his descendants fell with him; all are under the condemnation which he brought upon them: where, then, among those guilty descendants can one be found of competent worth to take the place of a second Adam, the headship of a new race, the Redeemer of sinful men who are repre-

sented by his sufferings expiatory of their offences? It is obvious, again, that the Second Adam, like the first, must be the Son of God, of sufficient dignity to be constituted, and actually constituted by God, Head or Representative of all who are to be redeemed through him. There must also be such a worth, or legal value, in his sufferings, as fully to vindicate the justice of God in accepting them on behalf of the sinners saved. But we have seen from our previous reasoning that no mere creature could be accepted to bear, or could bear, if accepted, the sufferings due to us. How, then, shall this difficulty in the way of a just mercy be met? (O the matchless wisdom of divine love!) The Only Begotten, eternal Son of God himself, becomes incarnate as our Elder Brother; he assumes to himself, out of a woman's flesh and blood, a perfect human nature, begotten by the Holy Ghost, and by thus uniting it with his own divinity in one person, not only sustains the humanity under all the suffering of imputed guilt, but presents a surety of infinitely sufficient worth to represent all the redeemed. Therefore, was "laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" therefore, did it please the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief; therefore, did he forever "put away sin by the one sacrifice of himself," and by that "one offering perfect forever them that are sanctified." Our sufferings on account of sin would have been everlasting, because no sufferings of ours could ever have satisfied the penalty due to the sinner; but such is the incalculable merit of our Surety's sufferings for us, that in a portion of three days, the law was fully vindicated, and the whole Church absolved. Adam was made in the likeness of God, so far as a creature could reflect the likeness of

the Creator, yet was he sustained only by a creature's strength, and he fell; but in our Second Adam dwelt "the Lord from heaven," the Son of God himself; the first Adam was made "a living soul;" the Second Adam is a quickening Spirit, for in him is not only a life derived, but he is the Life-giver. Therefore did he, "through death, destroy him that hath the power of death," and become the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

2. Our Mediator must also be "very God in one person with his human nature," that "he might obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life."

Here are two offices of the Mediator for which his Divinity is necessary:—

The obtaining for us righteousness and life; and the restoring of righteousness and life to us.

A. The obtaining for us righteousness and life.

It is the part of the Mediator to act for us with God, and, therefore, is it requisite not only that a sufficient satisfaction be made to the law under which we are condemned, but that such satisfaction be duly presented and pleaded before God; and our justification, with its consequence, our readmission to the divine favor, acknowledged and secured. This justification and divine favor are meant by the terms "righteousness and life," used by the Catechism; for, according to the method of grace, the sinner who believes is not personally, that is, through his own merit, righteous, but considered and treated as righteous or justified solely on account of the satisfaction rendered to the law for him by his substitute; and the favor of God, which is life, goes out to him again only through his substitute, with whom, as the atoning representative of the sinner, God

is well pleased. Is it not, then, clear that only he, who could make the satisfaction, can plead its merit before God and claim its reward? Who less than divine can thus speak with God? Who less than divine can take into his grasp such great blessing as life for all the host of the redeemed? If nothing less than divine strength could sustain the humanity of our surety under the wrath due to his people, an equal capacity is needed to contain the immensity of favor vouchsafed by the love of the reconciled Father to all his ransomed family. So reasons the Apostle of our glorious Mediator: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;" and again: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye (all believers) are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." And in the same strain, John the Baptist testified of our Lord: "Of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace." All the grace we need we receive of Christ; therefore all fulness dwells in Christ, and that he might contain all this fulness, in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead. It was necessary that the divine nature should sustain the humanity of the substitute, in the work of atonement; so it is necessary that after the merit of the work is provided, the divine nature should qualify the Mediator to obtain and receive by his intercession eternal redemption for us.

B. The restoring of righteousness and life to us.

It is the part of the Mediator to act for God with us; therefore is it requisite that not only the justification of the sinner, and the consequent life be obtained for

us, but, also, that those benefits be actually conferred, and we restored to the enjoyment of all we have lost through sin. Who less than God can accomplish this in us? Who can justify where God has condemned, but God himself? Who can give life back, but the Lord of life? Who less than God can visit the hearts of all the Church, and by the Holy Spirit incline them all to receive by faith the pardon God extends, and strengthen them all for the new obedience which God requires? If our Mediator be not divine, how can he be omnipresent to hear every prayer of each one of all his people; omniscient, to know their every thought and every need; omnipotent, to sustain them all against every temptation, under every duty, amidst sorrows innumerable, and throughout time to a glorious eternity? God adopts the penitents, but it is Christ who "gives power to as many as believe," to become the sons of God; God strengthens them with all might, but it is through Christ strengthening him that the believer can do all things; God assures comfort, but the comfort reaches us only through him, who, having been the man of sorrows, is now the Lord of joy; God has prepared unspeakable glories for them that love him, and they are kept by his power unto salvation; but Christ who is the Author, is also the Finisher of their faith, and when they enter the full blessedness of heaven, it is into the joy of their Lord. Christ is the beginning, Christ the continuance, Christ the end; Christ first, Christ always, Christ last, Christ all in all. He is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by him. Who but the Son of God, can lie in the bosom of God? From that bosom he came to be our Surety in human flesh; to

that bosom he has returned, but with our flesh about him, to be our ever prevalent Advocate, and the accomplisher of our redemption ; for where he is glorified, our humanity is glorified ; and where the Son of God dwells, there dwells his body the Church, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

LECTURE VII.

THE PROVISION OF A MEDIATOR.

SIXTH LORD'S DAY.

THE PROVISION OF A MEDIATOR.

HAVING ascertained the qualities necessary to a sufficient substitute or mediator for us with God, viz: That he be very man and very God in one person; we come to consider:—

FOURTHLY: *The provision of such a substitute or mediator in our Lord Jesus Christ, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.*

"Who, then," asks the 18th Question, "*is that mediator, that in one person is both very God and real righteous man?*"

Ans. Our Lord Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

"Whence knowest thou this?" demands the Catechism, (Quest. 19th.)

Ans. "From the Holy Gospel, which God himself revealed first in Paradise, and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and was pleased to represent it by the shadows of sacrifices, and the other ceremonies of the law; and, lastly, has accomplished it by his only begotten Son."

The order in which these questions and answers occur is the most natural for the purpose of the Catechism; but for convenience of exposition we shall invert it,* and mark:—

* This Ursinus himself is forced to do. p. 128, Lond. fol. 1633.

I. The *Fact* of divine testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Mediator (Quest. and Ans. 19th); and,
 II. The *Substance* of that testimony concerning him, (18th.)

I. The *Fact* of divine testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Mediator.

"Whence knowest thou thy misery?" asked the Catechism, when opening to us our ruin through sin; and the answer given to us was: "Out of the law of God." From God only do we know our duty, our wickedness, and our condemnation; so, from God only, can we learn the way of escape from guilt, and return to life. The revelation of such a merciful deliverance is, indeed, as it was called by the heavenly Messenger to the shepherds of Bethlehem, "glad tidings of great joy;" which is more briefly expressed by our one Saxon word, *Gospel*, a contraction of *goodspell*, corresponding to the Greek, *Evangel*. This "glorious" and delightful term "Gospel," our Catechism applies to the whole doctrine of salvation as taught throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; for which there is the highest authority. The word *Gospel*, it is true, does not occur in our English translation of the Old Testament, but its synonyms are frequent there, and, in citations from the former Scriptures by the New Testament writers, it is freely employed: "Search the Scriptures," that is, of the Old Testament which only then were written, said our Lord to the skeptical Jews, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." So, also, in his memorable walk with the two disciples to Emmaus, he said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suf-

fered these things, and to enter into his glory? And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." From these and many other texts, we learn, that the main purpose of all Scripture is to teach the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, and whatever we find in them is contributive to the great theme.

A. "God himself revealed it first in Paradise." There, after their fall and before their expulsion from Eden, God himself, in the hearing of our first parents, said to the serpent-tempter: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Christ, the son of a virgin, came emphatically as the seed of the woman; between him and "the old serpent the devil," there was battle to extremity; and though in the desperate struggle our Champion was sorely wounded, he crushed the head of our foe, "destroying death and him that had the power of death." Hence this prophecy, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, is properly regarded as the first promise and proclamation of the Gospel.

B. The sacrifice by Abel of the firstlings of his flock, the life of lambs substituted in typical expiation of sin, shows that he apprehended the future sacrifice of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," for us, and told that in so doing he acted "by faith," and faith supposes a revelation of promise. The offering of the sacrifice was itself a publication of the Gospel by Abel, and so we find our Lord naming him as the first of the prophets, when, speaking of the prophets slain by wicked men he says: "The blood of

all the prophets . . . from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple."

The publication of the Gospel thus begun was, doubtless, continued by the patriarchs until the flood, though the record of their preaching and the range of it is but indistinct; for Jude speaks of Enoch prophesying concerning the coming of our Lord, and Peter expressly calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness," and that Christ preached by him "while the ark was a preparing," (2 Peter ii. 5; 1 Peter iii. 19, 20.) So Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, asserts plainly that God preached the Gospel unto Abraham, saying: "In thee shall all nations be blessed;" which revelation was repeated unto Isaac and Jacob, and by them all, and many of their distinguished descendants, "published" to the house of Israel.

The strain was taken up, and the publication continued, by prophet after prophet; their intimations becoming clearer and clearer, like the brightening dawn, until Jesus, of whom Moses and all of them did write, himself appeared, the Sun of righteousness, "with healing in his wings." Respecting this successive and unanimously concurrent testimony, the Apostle Peter has this remarkable language: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by

them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

C. Nay, such was the condescending goodness of God, that, not content with "revealing it" himself, "first in Paradise," and "afterwards publishing it by the patriarchs and prophets," he "was pleased to represent it by the shadows of sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law." Under the former dispensation, the enlightening influences of the Holy Ghost were not granted so abundantly as they are to us under this which is emphatically "the ministration of the Spirit;" and our heavenly Father assisted the faith of his people by sensible signs and emblems. Such were the sacrifices of living victims taught to the worshipper, as we have seen, near the gates of Paradise; the translation of Enoch, a testimony of God to the righteousness of faith; the ark of Noah, an eloquent emblem of the covenant within which the Church is safe amidst the ruin of ungodly men; the rescue of Isaac, the son of promise, from the death for which, at the command of God, the father of the faithful had prepared him; the wrestling of Jacob with the Angel of the Covenant, until he obtained from the present Son of God the blessing he desired; the deliverance of Israel from the destruction of Egypt by the blood of the Paschal lamb. But, after the formal constitution of the pilgrim tribes at the foot of Sinai, as a church or congregation of worshippers, God appointed the law of ordinances, that by a regular and complete system of types or shadows (so called because pre-cursing the substance that was to come) all the great doctrines of the Gospel might be presented distinctly to the eyes of the people. All these representative cere-

monies typified Christ. Every service and every officer of that law pointed forward to Christ and his offices for us. The shedding of blood, the burning of the victims, the sending of the scape-goat with the sins of the people into the wilderness; the purification of the sinner by the hyssop branch sprinkling the sacrificial blood upon him; the shew-bread, the lights of the sanctuary, the offering of incense, the Visible Glory resting on the ark of the testimony; the ark itself with its propitiatory and the memorials which the propitiatory covered; the officiating priesthood, especially the high-priest, with the sanctifying mitre on his head, the mystical Urim and Thummim on his breast and his robes of ceremony; the intercession of the high-priest once a year within the veil and the blessing which followed it; all represented and preached Christ and his Gospel, the provision made for our need, and the glory consequent upon the grace. All declared the necessity and appointment of a Mediator for us, the substitution of his person to bear the wrath of God on our behalf, his acceptableness with God and his intercession, which the Father heareth always, and the gift of the Holy Ghost through him. The ceremonial law was, in fact, the Gospel of the Old Testament.

D. All these promises, publications, prophecies, ceremonies, and officers had their anti-type or reality in Christ. By his incarnation, his anointing from the Holy Ghost, by his life of obedience, his bitter sorrows, his unspeakable agony, his death in darkness on the cross accursed of God, his burial, his uprising from the dead, his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of the Father, his pleading for us there as our Advocate, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in

answer to his prayers, he has accomplished the truth of his Gospel and made clear as the light of day the doctrines dimly perceptible amidst the shadows of the law. "The law was given by Moses,"—the moral law which brings condemnation, and the ceremonial law, which shadowed forth the promises of life; "but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"—*grace*, deliverance from the condemnation of the moral law, *truth*, the reality or actual fulfilment of the things before shadowed by the types of the ceremonial law.

It is, therefore, to this Gospel, the revelation of God concerning Jesus Christ, the foretellings and prefigurations of the Old Testament, with the histories and doctrinal expositions of the New, that we go for knowledge of the Mediator; our faith is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." The truth on which we of the Reformed Churches rely is the word of God, the whole word of God, and the word of God alone. Nothing short of divine testimony do we credit; all that is supported by divine testimony do we believe; whatever has not the divine testimony we reject. From God alone we can derive our religious creed, for he is the object of all worship; from him alone our rules of moral practice, for he is the object of all duty.

II. The *substance* of the divine testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as our Mediator. This is given in the answer to the 18th Question, which has two parts—the first: a recital of the three principal names designating our Mediator; the second: a comprehensive catalogue of the blessings which we have in him.

A. Our Mediator is "the Lord Jesus Christ." Of

these names we shall be required to treat fully in expounding the lessons of the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Lord's Days, and need now note only a few things.

a. He is our Lord. This is an epithet of authority and power, which belongs to him by delegated right as appointed by the Father, in the plan of redemption, to rule over the Church and over all things for the sake of the Church; and throughout the New Testament (with but two or three not contradictory exceptions) it is applied exclusively to him as the Son of God incarnate, the Saviour. "Unto you," said the angel to the shepherds, "is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord;" and the Apostle to the Romans: "For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." From which, and many other passages, we see that he is called Lord, not merely in virtue of his original divinity as the Second Person of the Godhead, (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!) but with special reference to his mediatorial character; nay, that it was bestowed upon him in reward of his mediatorial obedience. "All power," said he himself after his resurrection, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" and the Apostle to the Philippians testifies of the Immanuel: "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name (or office) which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the

glory of God the Father." Yet does the delegation of such authority to him as the Saviour prove his divinity. To what mere creature could God the Father commit a viceroyship so great? Who, less than divine, could comprehend the divine counsels for the government of the Church? Who, less than divine, could sustain the weight of all power over all things in heaven, earth, and hell? Who, less than divine, could receive the homage of "every knee" and the ascriptions of "every tongue," as the "Lord," "whose right it is to reign?"

b. "Our Lord Jesus." This is the name which was given to him by the angel "before he was conceived in the womb," and when the announcement was made to the virgin that she should bring forth a son. It may be, therefore, considered as more peculiarly his human name, the name by which he was called by his mother and kindred and acquaintances. So Peter, preaching to the mixed multitude, says: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you;" and Paul to Timothy: "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." But the name was given to him because of its peculiar significance: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall *save* his people from their sins." The word is an imitation of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means a saviour, or one who makes safe. As Joshua, the son of Nun, having succeeded Moses by the command of God, led the tribes in safety to a triumphant possession of the promised land; so does our Jesus deliver his brethren of the true Israel, from the power of their sins, their worst enemies, and bring them through all difficulties to the secure enjoyment of their heavenly rest. For this he unites to his

infinitely divine attributes, the experience and full sense of our humanity, assuring us of his sympathy, and encouraging us by his power.

c. "The Lord Jesus Christ." This is a verbal noun from a word signifying *to anoint*,—anointing with oil in solemn ceremony being the method by which prophets, priests, and kings were consecrated under the Old Testament. It is properly neither a personal name, nor a title descriptive of office, but being added to *Lord Jesus*, declares that he has been appointed and confirmed by God as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me," is the language which was prophetically put into the mouth of our Lord; and, accordingly, we read in the Gospel that "Jesus, being baptized (by John), and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said: 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.'" This unction of the Holy Ghost was the inauguration of our Lord Jesus to his mediatorial office, by God the Father. Hence, because of his infinite preëminence as an office-bearer by divine appointment, he is called emphatically "the Christ," or "the Messiah," which is the Hebrew synonym. The doctrine which we should derive from the word Christ, as applied to our Lord Jesus, is, that the efficiency of our Saviour's atonement depended not merely upon the dignity of his person, or the infinite merit of his work, but also on the fact of his having been called and set apart to his mediatorial office by God himself. In the appointment of God the Son, by God the Father, and his anointment by God the Holy Ghost, we see the three Persons of the Godhead united as the God of our redemption.

B. The Catechism adds a comprehensive catalogue of the blessings which we have in our Lord Jesus Christ, taken from 1 Cor. i. 30: "Of him (that is, by the gracious will of God), are ye in Christ Jesus; who of God (that is, by appointment of God) is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" to which the Apostle adds: "that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord;" the term "Lord," in this latter verse, with "Christ Jesus" in the former, making the triple appellation by which we acknowledge and adore the Immanuel as our Saviour, "the Author and Finisher of our faith."

a. He is "made unto us wisdom." He is the wisdom of God unto our salvation, because it was infinite wisdom which provided the method of our justification; and the doctrine of Christ is the sum of all divine truth, through which God makes himself known as our God. He is made unto us wisdom, because by his Holy Spirit the writers of the Old and New Testaments were moved to prepare that only and sufficient treasury of divine truth for our learning, comfort, patience, and hope; and because, by the power of that same spirit within us, we are enlightened to understand the truth, converted to love the truth, and strengthened to obey the truth.

All the knowledge which the Christian needs must come to him through Christ the Mediator, as the Apostle says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son;" and again: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the

face of Jesus Christ." By Christ the Mediator, we have infinite wisdom speaking to us with human lips.

b. "And righteousness." We have nothing of our own that is fit to appear before him, but, covered with sin, we could not stand in his presence; and all the merit of his expiatory death and obedient life is freely imputed to the believer as the perfectly sufficient ground of his justification; and, clothed in Christ's righteousness, he is accepted as a penitent and adopted as a child by the reconciled Father.

c. "And sanctification." The blessing of sanctification is inseparable from the grace of justification. "Jesus shall save his people from their sins." It is the power of his Holy Spirit applying to our hearts the doctrine of his atoning and interceding love, which transforms our dispositions from enmity to the love of God, purifies our affections from the contaminating grossness of the flesh, and supplies to our faith those superior motives which successfully oppose the temptations of the world. This renovating change is gradual, and never complete in this world, but it is begun with faith, as the Evangelist says: "To as many as received him . . . gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." But the full perfection of his people is secured, for —

d. "He is made unto us . . . redemption." Redemption most often, and certainly when following sanctification, signifies the full and accomplished salvation of the believer, both body and soul; his entire deliverance from sin and guilt and death; and his restoration complete to the favor, and presence, and enjoyment of God forever. This Christ undertakes, and this he will perform. "He is able to save even to the

uttermost" extremity of this life, all that come unto God by him. He is the Forerunner, who for us has entered and taken possession of heaven, the second Paradise; he is the Resurrection and Life, and all who believe in him, though they die, shall live; he is our life himself, and wherever he is formed in the heart, there he is the hope, the earnest, and the beginning of heavenly, immortal glory. He is all our wisdom, all our righteousness, all our sanctification; our all in all. Who then can pluck his people out of those pierced hands by which he holds them with an almighty love! They are his own, purchased by his blood; his own, the travail of his soul; his own, the trophies of his grace; and will he suffer himself to be robbed of his own? Beloved Master, our Elder Brother, Jehovah-Jesus, Lord our Righteousness, — thou art "the way, the truth, and the life!"

LESSONS.

First: Let us trust in Christ alone, fully, to the end; for pardon, for strength, for glory.

Secondly: Let us rely upon his word; for guidance, for instruction, for encouragement.

Thirdly: Let us live near to him, by prayer, by communion, by close following of his example.

LECTURE VIII.

SAVING FAITH.

SEVENTH LORD'S DAY.

SAVING FAITH.

QUEST. XX. *Are all men, then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?*

ANS. No; only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits by a true faith.

QUEST. XXI. *What is true faith?*

ANS. True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the Gospel in my heart, that, not only unto others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

QUEST. XXII. *What is, then, necessary for a Christian to believe?*

ANS. All things promised us in the Gospel; which the Articles of our Catholic, undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.

QUEST. XXIII. *What are those Articles?*

1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;
2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son our Lord;
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell;
5. The third day he rose again from the dead;
6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost;
9. I believe in a holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints;
10. The forgiveness of sins;
11. The resurrection of the body;
12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

IT is the unspeakably precious privilege of the Christian preacher to declare that God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but, on the contrary, hath himself provided by Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord incarnate as the seed of the woman, an aton-

ing righteousness infinitely sufficient to save all who go unto him for pardon and life. This we have endeavored to do, briefly, in discoursing on the lessons of the Fifth and Sixth Lord's Days, hoping for permission from a good Providence to open the doctrines of redemption more fully in our comments on several articles of the creed. To-day, the Catechism teaches us how we must go unto God that we may be received of him in mercy; and the lesson before us shows:—

FIRST: *The necessity of Faith in Christ.*

(20th Question and Answer.)

SECONDLY: *The nature of true Faith.*

(21st Question and Answer.)

THIRDLY: *The Articles of true Christian Faith.*

(22d and 23d Questions and Answers.)

FIRST: *The necessity of Faith in Christ.*

The Catechism having taught us that all men, being represented in Adam, came with him under condemnation; and that our Lord Jesus Christ, in his perfect satisfaction to the justice of God, represented, as the second Adam, all who are saved, an inquiry naturally arises: Is the representation of the Mediator commensurate with that of our first parent? *i. e.* "Are all men, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?" The answer given is, "No;" Christ's representation is on another principle, and he saves "only those who are ingrafted into him and receive all his benefits by a true faith."

I. All men are not saved by Christ.

The Scriptures, while they conclude all under sin, and set forth the infinite merits of the atonement provided for sinners, declare that there are those to whom the benefits of the atonement are not applied.

The unregenerate are not saved:

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" said our Lord to Nicodemus.

The impenitent are not saved:

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" said he to the Jews.

The unbelieving are not saved:

"He that believeth not shall be damned;" said he to his apostles, when sending them forth to preach the Gospel.

The wilfully vicious are not saved. Throughout the Scriptures, liars, adulterers, drunkards, thieves, murderers, and other gross criminals are denied the hope of heaven.

And, that there will be found such unreclaimed transgressors when Christ completes his mediatorial administration, we know from his own foreshowing of the final judgment: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory . . . before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 31-46.

All men, therefore, are not represented in Christ the Saviour.

II. Those, and those only, are saved, "who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits by a true faith."

1. The representation of all men in Adam is on the principle of their natural descent from him, as the original man, and progenitor of the race. Between us and the Lord Jesus Christ there is no such natural or necessary connection. By his humanity he is our kinsman or brother, but not our parent, or, of birth-right, our sponsor. He represents his people of his free choice, according to the will of God in redemption; his people accept him as their representative, of their free choice, according to the same divine will. The relation is, therefore, not original, but appointed; not necessary, but gracious; not natural, but spiritual; ordained to deliver those whom Christ represents, from their condemnation with Adam; yet in no sense violating the justice which demanded the condemnation, but on the contrary, rendering a full satisfaction to the law of God for those who are delivered. In a word, Christ takes the place of Adam, to supply the righteousness which Adam failed to render, yet not on behalf of all whom Adam represented, but on behalf of those whom he represents as Redeemer. If this difference in the representation be not admitted, it must follow that as all men fell in Adam, all men are saved in Christ, which the Scriptures show is not the case; wherefore, when the Scripture says, that as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive; and "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," we must understand the Apostle as speaking of "all" represented in either; in Adam, the head of his race, in Christ the Head of his Church, which is his body and "his fulness."

The same rule of interpretation applies to many Scriptures, which the superficial or heterodox reader might quote, as proving that most inconsistent doctrine of universal redemption. It should also be remembered, that, under the former dispensation, salvation seemed confined to the Jews, whereas now it is preached to all people; and when it is said that Christ is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, it means for the sins of all (not of the Jews only but of all) nations,—or of all those in every nation who believe. Faith must always be supposed, for "he that believeth not (Jew or Gentile) shall be damned."

2. Such, then, being the character of the relation, there must be some method by which those who are saved are brought into a vital union with their representative, that they may receive the advantage of his mediation for them. This link, or bond, or method of the sinner's connection with Christ, the Catechism, according to the testimony of all Scripture, declares to be *faith*. It cannot be any merit, or anything that has merit, of our own; because the representation of Christ presupposes that we are utterly guilty, and is intended to provide for us righteousness of which we are ourselves utterly incapable; and, therefore, it must be some purely gracious process by which we are made Christ's, and Christ is made ours. Life, under the first covenant, was promised on a condition: "Do this and thou shalt live." Christ, the second Adam, assumed the condition in the room of his church, and by his perfect righteousness purchased, or merited for them, life. Our enjoyment of that life can, therefore, depend upon no condition, but is simply bestowment on Christ's part, and acceptance on ours. All this the answer of the Cate-

chism teaches: "Only those (are saved) who are ingrafted into Christ, and receive all his benefits by a true faith."

Here is an act of God: They are grafted into Christ by faith; and an act of those who are saved: "They receive all his benefits by a true faith." God brings them into this union; they receive (*embrace or lay hold of*, is a better translation) all the benefits flowing from the union. The act of God is first, for he is the giver; the act of the sinner follows, for he is the receiver.

The figure of ingrafting is taken from our Lord's own parable of The Living Vine (John xv. 1-8), and the Apostle Paul's of The Olive Trees (Rom. xi. 17-24); but it is familiar to our own observation, and delightfully illustrative. By nature, we are branches of a condemned and pernicious vine, bearing only evil fruit, and soon to be cast into the fire. Of ourselves, we cannot separate ourselves from the accursed stem, much less make ourselves part of the living vine, Christ Jesus. God, by his Holy Spirit, takes us, cuts us off from the ruined vine, and grafts us into the stem of Christ; the vital union is then formed, a new life flows into the grafted branch, and it blossoms, buds, puts forth leaves, and yields good fruit, not from itself, but by virtue of the life it derives out of the stem. Christ is still the vine; the fruit is also all his, but he makes the once wild branch a part of himself, and so makes it fruitful, and himself fruitful. Or, to lay aside the figure: The sinner is joined to Christ by the free grace of God, and derives spiritual life from Christ, and Christ works good works through him. The glory is Christ's, the benefits are the believer's.

God, we have said, is the agent in the grafting, but

the method of engraftment which he uses is *faith*. Do you ask how this may be, since faith is the act of the Christian? We answer: Faith, though our personal act, is not of our own strength, but is the effect of the Holy Spirit's regenerating grace, and this grace comes to us from God, through Christ. Thus, the Heavenly Father provides in the Mediator the proper object of faith, and fills him with the Spirit of all grace; he then brings the sinner nigh to the Saviour whom he has pierced, and, as he applies the sinner to the bleeding side, grace flows out to the soul, and the sinner, feeling within him the vivifying power, believes and clings to his embracing Saviour. Grace from the Saviour's side, and grace in the believer's apprehending soul, unite to bind in union close and sweet and vital, the sinner saved, to the Saviour of sinners. From that moment he becomes one with Christ; all the benefits which Christ, as his representative, has obtained for him, become his. Christ is, "of God made unto him, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

3. Do you ask again: Why faith is made the necessary method of union? We answer briefly now, as we shall more at large hereafter. It is necessary that we return to our obedience; and the great command of God in Christ is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." It is necessary that the sinner acknowledge Christ as his representative, and faith is such acknowledgment. It is necessary that the sinner should apply to Christ for his acceptance, and faith is such an application. It is necessary that the sinner receive the benefits of salvation, and faith is such an apprehending or laying hold of them. It is necessary that there be a channel of communication between Christ, the fountain, and the

sinner's soul, and faith is the golden conduit. As salvation is all of grace, so it is all through Christ; and as it is all through Christ, so it is all by faith.

How important, therefore, that our faith be true! Let us, then, learn:

SECONDLY: *The Nature of True Faith.*

We derive whatever knowledge we have of things beyond our immediate consciousness, either through our own perceptions or from the testimony of others; but, as both our range and power of personal observation are very limited, by far the greatest part of our knowledge is communicated to us by others. When such testimony is brought before us, we exercise our judgment respecting the witnesses, determining whether they can be relied on for veracity and intelligence; since a man may wish to state the truth, yet lack sufficient good sense or opportunity, or both, to know what is the truth; or he may have the sense and the information, yet lack honesty of purpose; but, when we consider him entitled to credit, we believe him, and add the facts which he states to our knowledge. Thus, I am certain that there is such a country as Japan, though I have never been there; and that Alexander was once king of Macedon, though he died two thousand years ago. This belief, or holding of testimony to be true, is the same as *faith*; *faith* being derived from a Latin word corresponding to our Saxon *belief*.

When, however, the testimony respects things in which we are personally concerned, and our belief of it is full, we rely upon it and act accordingly. Thus, a merchant has advices from a correspondent at a foreign port, that, by sending there a cargo of certain commodities, he will not fail to realize a larger profit

than he can by any other transaction; and, if he relies upon the testimony, he does not hesitate to make the venture. Without such reliance upon others, how narrow would be the sphere of commerce! Such a practical reliance is the same as *confidence* in testimony.

Now, the Scriptures contain the declarations of God respecting all things which concern our everlasting welfare; and belief of God as the infallible witness, and of the truths revealed in his testimony, is the *faith* by which we are grafted into Christ and receive all his benefits as our Saviour. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that through the depraving effect of sin upon our minds and hearts, we are unable, without divine grace, either rightly to understand, or duly to appreciate, spiritual (that is, religious) truths. Hence the Catechism, in the 21st Question and Answer, teaches us: I. The several essential parts of genuine faith; and, II. The divine source from which such faith is derived.

I. The several essential parts of genuine faith.

These may be brought under three heads: Faith in the *witness*; faith in the *testimony*; faith in the *application of the testimony to ourselves*.

a. Faith in the *witness*. The witness is none other than God himself. The first act of religion is to believe that God exists; and to believe in the existence of the true God, is to believe that he is the eternal, self-subsisting Author and Sovereign of all things, infinite as to his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.* From him alone can come a certain knowledge of whatever is requisite for us to know, because only he who made and administers all

* See Westminster Assembly's Catechism.

things can know them aright; but especially is it necessary that he should make known to us the things of religion, because he is the only and supreme Object of all religion, and, therefore, has alone the right as well as the knowledge to declare what is essential to true religious belief, affection, and practice. It is utterly absurd to suppose for a moment, or on any plea, that any man, or any creature, or any combination of creatures, can be authority to us on any matter between us and God; for were we to receive their testimony, it would be faith in creatures, not faith in God; and any practice founded on such testimony would be obedience to creatures, not obedience to God; and, consequently, such faith and obedience would not be any part of true religion. Whatever faith it be that stops short of God, is false, deceiving, and destructive. Even our blessed Lord, when incarnate as the servant-mediator, claimed to be trusted only on the testimony of God the Father: "If I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me. . . . But I receive not testimony from man. . . . And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." And, again, of God's people, "It is written in the prophets: They shall be all taught of God."

While, therefore, we utterly reject all dictates of human reason or of any other creature, we should bow unhesitatingly before God as the infinitely true and sufficient Teacher of all religion, receiving whatever he declares to be truth, not because it coincides with our reason, or because it has the stamp of ecclesiastical authority, but simply because it is the declaration of God. Lay this at the foundation of your religious

principle, and you are safe from all the subtleties of men or devils. "He that believeth in him shall not be confounded." Attempt religion without this, and "the multitude of thoughts within" you will be dark and confused as chaos, before God said "Let there be light!"

b. Faith in the *testimony* of God. This follows as a logical and moral necessity from faith in God as the witness. We are to ascertain whether or not God has made a revelation to us, and, if so, where that revelation is to be found; after which there is no alternative but to believe whatever he has been pleased to reveal, all that he has revealed, and nothing beyond that he has revealed. It were preposterous for us, who have confessed that we can know nothing of religion except as God makes it known to us, to sit in judgment upon the matter of his teaching, receiving this and rejecting that portion of it, according as it seems consistent or not with our reason. In acknowledging God to be the only true and sufficient witness, we have bound ourselves to believe his testimony implicitly and unhesitatingly. Upon the same principle, we may not extend our religious opinions beyond what he has taught, for, besides our incompetence to make farther discoveries, we cannot allow ourselves, without gross irreverence, to suppose that God would teach us imperfectly, or keep back anything which is profitable or comforting.

God has given us a revelation, and that revelation is found in the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We may and should exercise our reason in judging of the evidences on which the claim of those Scriptures to be the Word of God is founded; but, the moment that we admit their divine inspiration, right

reason becomes faith in all they declare, and in their full declarations as utterly sufficient for our religious science and practice. Of the proofs that the Scriptures are the Word of God, this is not the place, nor have we the time, now to speak. It is enough, at present, to say, that we have historical testimony which puts beyond doubt the fact of their having been written by holy men of God, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" that such is the incomparable majesty of their style, the supernatural elevation of their truths, the admirable harmony of their parts, though published at intervals by different (secondary) authors, during a period of more than fifteen hundred years; the purity and uncompromising sternness of their moral sentiments and precepts; the vast and salutary control which they have had upon the lives of those who have believed them, and the nations through which they have been disseminated, as to render their ascription to any source less than divine a contradiction and absurdity. The Catechism does not argue, or even admit the question; it is (as was shown in our remarks prefatory to the lesson of the First Lord's Day) addressed to Christians; and every sincere Christian has in his own conscious experience a proof, divinely given him by the testimony of the Holy Spirit to his soul, stronger than all other proofs beside, and one which no arguments of infidelity can shake. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself," for none but he who made the heart could have promulged a scheme so adapted to its wants, its weaknesses, its temptations, and its immortality. The true Christian, therefore, has, in the language of the Catechism, "a certain knowledge, whereby he holds for truth all that God has revealed to us in his

Word." Not that a thorough knowledge of all that is taught in the Word is absolutely necessary to saving faith, for the Christian is born unto eternal life as a little child, and many are unfitted, for various reasons, to pursue the study necessary for a thorough science of divine religion; and such are the infinities of truth opened by the sacred writings, that no finite mind can fathom them in time, or even in eternity; but every true Christian, however simple or learned, believes the main fundamental principles on which the entire system is built up, and is ready, from his faith in God the witness, to receive with humble and glad faith all that he progressively ascertains "to be written in the Scriptures for our learning." He "grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

c. Faith in *the application of the testimony to ourselves*. "True faith," says the Catechism, "is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his Word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the Gospel in my heart, that not only to others but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given of God, merely of grace only, for the sake of Christ's merits."

The Catechism does not assert, as I understand it, that such "a certain knowledge whereby we hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word," can exist in our souls without an apprehension of that truth for ourselves, or that a sinner can believe in the grant of Christ's saving benefits to other sinners, while he does not believe in their grant to him; but, that a personal reliance on the Gospel with its promises is essentially necessary to a true faith, and that without such

an application of the Gospel to his particular case, whatever semblance of belief in the Scriptures a man may have, it is but a semblance and not a genuine faith. This will appear at once, if we consider the vast importance of the truths contained in the Scriptures to each sinner who knows the Gospel. We are the sinners of whom the Scriptures speak; upon us rests the wrathful curse of divine condemnation for time and eternity; to us the only way of escape from death, the only way of life, is declared; and salvation, though provided for many, is promised only to those who believe, and to them certainly. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Mark the change from the noun of multitude to the singular person, "whosoever." Again: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The church is not saved in a mass, but individually. Faith and repentance are personal acts; pardon and life are given to persons; and, therefore, except a man believe, and repent, and accept the grace for himself, he does not truly believe in the Gospel at all. For a true belief in such momentous declarations must be something more than a mere acknowledgment that they are truths. Except we act upon them, except we are convinced of our own guilt, except we put our trust in Christ as our Saviour, except we forsake our sins and endeavor after new obedience, is it not clear that we have no genuine belief of the divine testimony? For who can believe in eternity and not make preparation for it? Who can believe in eternal punishment, and not strive to escape it? Who can believe in eternal blessedness, and not strive to attain it? Who can believe that Christ

is able, willing, and ready to save every one that comes to him, and not go to him to be saved? I may be told that Julius Cæsar was murdered in the Roman capitol nearly nineteen hundred years ago, but whether I believe it or not, it will make no difference in my conduct, for his death has no perceptible bearing on my welfare; but, when God declares to me that a few years after Cæsar's death, his only begotten Son became incarnate, passed through a life of trial and righteousness, and died upon a cross, that by the merits of his substituted merits all who put their trust in him shall be saved, but all who reject him shall be damned; if I truly believe the testimony, I will trust and follow him as my Saviour; but if I profess to believe that he is the Saviour of other sinners, yet do not rely upon him as mine, my belief that he is willing to save all who believe must come fatally short of true faith in the divine Word. This personal application and apprehension of Christ's Gospel is the faith which unites us to Christ, grafts us in him, and makes the channel of his saving benefits to our souls. Thus the Apostle exultingly says: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Not that Christ died for him only, or in any exclusive sense, but that, because he believed in Christ, he knew the promise of salvation by Christ was applicable to him. A thousand other scriptural proofs might be added, for it is a doctrine running through the whole Gospel. So sings the sweetest singer of modern Israel:—

"O love divine, how sweet thou art!
When shall I find this longing heart

All taken up by thee ?
 For thee I thirst, I die to prove
 The sweetness of redeeming love,
 The love of Christ for me."

II. The divine source from which this faith is derived.

"True faith," says the Catechism, is "an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the Gospel in my heart."

1. The Holy Ghost is the efficient agent, and works faith in the heart. Faith, as has been said, is a personal act, an exercise of a man's own judgment and will; but sin has so disordered and impaired our moral faculties as to render us incapable of understanding or relishing the truths of the divine Word; and as our hearts are by nature "enmity against God," so they are averse to all that he reveals. Ordinary observation shows that a criminal temper and conduct disinclines a man to hear whatever rebukes, condemns, or threatens him; renders him insensible to argument or motive; distorts his perceptions; preoccupies his convictions; stupefies his conscience; and even enrages him against the reasoning and the reasoner on the opposite side; so that we, without exaggeration, pronounce him to be incompetent to think truly, or decide justly; but much more is this the case with our fallen nature in respect to the principles of religion, which are opposed to our innate dispositions, and the habits of an ungodly life. Man lost by the fall that spiritual likeness to God, which answered with echoing assent every declaration of the divine will. Hence there must be, in order to faith, a regeneration or re-creation of our natures; an "enlightening of the eyes of our

understanding" that we "may know," a transformation by the renewing of our minds "that we may prove (learn by investigation) what is that (the) good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." This reparation of our moral faculties making us capable of faith, is the operation of the Holy Ghost; and, so, faith is said to be "wrought in us," though we exert the faith, or believe. Thus: the "Lord opened the heart" of Lydia, that she "attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul:" and again: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;" which corresponds to our Lord's promise, that when the Spirit of truth (before called by him the Holy Ghost) is come, he will guide you into all truth; and the fact, that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost, the triumphs of the Gospel over the carnal prejudices of men began. The Apostle Paul sums up the doctrine: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;" which means that the whole method of salvation through faith is the gracious gift of God, by the operations of the official agent in the communication of grace, — the Holy Ghost. In fact, we can neither do or be what is acceptable to God, but by the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. The *instrument* which the Holy Ghost employs to work faith in our hearts is "the Gospel," by which the Catechism means the whole Word of God. The truth of the Gospel is the testimony which we are to believe; and, therefore, faith cannot be wrought until the word is brought nigh to the soul by the Holy Ghost. God might, certainly, fill the soul of a man at once, and without any instrumentality, with all the

truths of religion, as he did the minds of prophets and apostles; but that would be inspiration by an act of divine sovereignty, not faith, which is an act of our own. It is true, also, that there is a work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, previous to his reception of the truth; but that is rather a preparation of the soul, a giving to it of a disposition to believe, than faith itself. But we can hardly doubt that there is a divine fitness in the Gospel to work this faith, when it is wielded by the hand of the Holy Ghost. The truths of the Gospel are precisely those which would, were there no fatal defect in the reasoning of men, convince them, and constrain their belief. Every Christian knows, also, by experience, that the growth of his soul in spiritual life is nourished by the Holy Ghost through the doctrines of the Gospel, and that they are admirably calculated for that end; so that we may without rashness believe the fitness of the same Gospel for the conviction and conversion of the impenitent. The manner, the arguments, the illustrations, the very language of the Scripture, have been arranged and adapted by the only all-wise Metaphysician for the purpose of working faith in the heart. Hence the main doctrine of Scripture, "Jesus Christ and him Crucified," is called, by the Apostle, "the wisdom of God, and the power of God" unto salvation; and, again, "the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" that is, it dissects and probes the heart to the quick. The Apostle Peter, also, makes the Word to be the living seed by which God begets his spiritual chil-

dren to eternal life: "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." This ascription of divine adaptedness to the Word as the chosen instrument, is not opposed to the efficiency of the Holy Ghost as the agent. An instrument can produce effect only when it is employed by an intelligent agent; and oftentimes an instrument is of such a character that a mighty and most skilful agent is required to wield it, which is preëminently the case with the Word of God. Because it is the Word of God, none but God can employ it effectually. It is a sword of exquisite keenness, but it is the sword of the Spirit; impotent of itself, yet powerful in his omnipotent hand.

The source of our faith is, therefore, the grace of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Christ; and the method of his operation is by the Gospel, which is the doctrine of Christ. Hence we learn the wisdom of looking to Christ for the Spirit of faith, its Author and Finisher. "Lord, increase our faith!" was the prayer of the disciples; let it be continually ours; until we shall no more have need even of God's testimony, but shall "see him as he is," "face to face!" And, also, we learn to recognize as true faith, only that which is wrought in our hearts by the Gospel. All dreams, or visions, or supernatural intimations of any kind; all impressions, sentiments, or impulses of our own; all dictates of public opinion, ecclesiastical decrees, or traditions of men are unworthy of trust. These are not instruments by which the Spirit works. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God alone. We believe God and his testimony. We need no more; we will take no less.

THIRDLY : *The articles of a true Christian faith.*

We learn from the 22d and 23d Questions and Answers, that these are stated in the admirable summary commonly called THE APOSTLES' CREED ; the study of which is, by divine permission, to occupy us for the next fifteen Lord's Days. We shall, therefore, reserve the opening of it until our next lesson, where it more properly belongs.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES. — *First* : The importance of ascertaining our union with Christ.

Secondly : The necessity of a personal faith in Christ.

Thirdly : The vital dependence of our souls for faith on the Holy Ghost.

Fourthly : The duty and privilege of studying the Word with prayer.

LECTURE IX.

THE BEING AND UNITY OF GOD.

EIGHTH LORD'S DAY.

THE BEING AND UNITY OF GOD.

QUEST. XXIV. *How are these articles divided ?*

ANS. Into three parts: The first is of God the Father, and our creation; the second is of God the Son, and our redemption; the third is of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification.

QUEST. XXV. *Since there is only one divine essence, why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ?*

ANS. Because God hath so revealed himself in his Word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God.

THE lesson of the last Lord's Day brought before us that compend of religious truth, commonly known as "The Apostles' Creed;" which, for at least thirteen centuries, has been acknowledged, formally or informally, by all bodies of men, not heretical, calling themselves Christians, as "a good confession." The lesson of to-day begins the commentary of our Church, in its Catechism, on its several articles; but, before entering upon the exposition, it is proper that some brief notice should be taken of the Creed itself, as a symbol or declaration of belief.

Here, and in the "Form for the administration of the Lord's Supper," it is denominated "our Catholic, undoubted Christian Faith," or summary confession of faith. *Christian*, because it distinguishes our only true religion from every false religion, the doctrine of salvation by Christ being its grand, peculiar characteristic; *undoubted*, because as a whole, and in its several particulars, it is derived from the sure and complete testimony of God's most holy word; *Catholic*, because it is

the faith of all true Christians of all ages, and throughout the world.

It takes its name of *Creed* or Belief from the Latin verb *Credo*, at the beginning, the translation of which is "I believe;" and we do not refuse to call it "The Apostles' Creed," because it sets forth the doctrine which is authoritatively recorded for the faith of the Church in the books of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church of Rome, however, misinterpreting and misquoting the language of some eminent and ancient doctors or fathers, and adding gross inventions of its own, has claimed for the Creed that its very form was actually the joint work of the apostles themselves; and that, before separating on their different missions, they determined to frame a common symbol by which the disciples of each might be recognized by the disciples of the others, and the unity of faith be preserved, each apostle contributing an article, thus making up the twelve as we find them; or, if Paul and Barnabas were among the compositors, fourteen, as the division is sometimes made. This fable has been incautiously received and reasserted by some Protestants, but ought to be utterly repudiated as unfounded and mischievous. For it is incredible that so important a transaction as the provision of a Creed for the whole Church, combining the inspiration of the apostolical college, should receive no notice from the historian Luke, or any other sacred writer; yet no mention of it is made anywhere in the New Testament, nor does the document itself anywhere appear, there being not the slightest allusion to it. All along down to Augustine, himself included, the early doctors set

forth nothing else than the canonical books of Scripture as the rule of faith; nor can we find the Apostles' Creed, as we have it, earlier, at the earliest, than toward the end of the fourth century. Parts of it, indeed, did appear, and it was gradually increasing to its complete form; but its full consistency cannot be discovered until about the time just stated. Therefore do we believe the doctrines of the Creed, not because they are contained in the Creed, which, as to its form, is an uninspired and human document, but because they are the doctrines of the Word of God. At the same time that we deny divine inspiration to the Creed, we rejoice in receiving it as the most condensed, comprehensive, and scriptural digest, or abridgment, of Christian truth framed by human hands; and fully adopt the encomium pronounced on it by St. Augustine: "It is a perfect compend of our faith, simple, brief, full; its simplicity adapted to ordinary minds; its brevity to our memories; its fulness to the entire doctrine." May God make our belief of it clear, strong, and entire!

Let us now consider the lesson proper to this Lord's Day, which consists of:—

FIRST: *A Division of the Creed into three parts.*

Twenty-fourth Question and Answer.

SECONDLY: *The fundamental doctrine of One God in Three Persons, which is the substance of the whole.*

Twenty-fifth Question and Answer.

FIRST. *A Division of the Creed into three parts:—*

The *First*, of God the *Father*, and our *Creation*;

The *Second*, of God the *Son*, and our *Redemption*;

The *Third*, of God the *Holy Ghost*, and our *Sanctification*.

The mission of the Church of God to preach the

Gospel throughout the world required that it should be presented before the world in an outward, visible organization, for which was necessary some public ceremony of separation, and a distinct avowal of faith to distinguish its members from unbelieving men. It, therefore, might have been expected that the Head of the Church would himself prescribe both the ceremony and the form of the confession, which he did when, giving the apostles his parting injunction, he said: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Baptism, or the application of water to the person of the candidate, was the ceremony by which the Church acknowledged him as a believer, and admitted him to her fellowship. The doctrine which he professed, and which was set forth as the common belief of the whole Church, is stated in the formula accompanying the administration of the ordinance. It matters little whether the person to be baptized himself uttered the words: "I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost;" or the administrator, when pronouncing the formula, thereby openly signified that the confession had been given in to him more privately; though it seems from several Scriptures probable that "confession" was made "with the mouth," publicly, at the time. The fact of his submitting to baptism administered to him with the formula, was a confession of his faith symbolized by those words. This, then, was the first form of the Christian Creed, and its three parts, the triple, yet united, foundation of all Christian belief. The instruction which he was to receive was not to be confined within the few words of the formula; our Lord enjoined that all nations

should be taught to "observe all things whatsoever he had commanded" the apostolical teachers; but the formula gives the three heads under which the more particular developments of the inspired scriptural doctrine should be arranged. Hence, the early churches, finding it necessary to guard against heretical misconceptions and unauthorized novelties, rendered their creeds more specific and nice, by parenthetical insertions, but preserved the order of the original symbol; and gradually the creed grew into the shape which it now has, and was adopted really, if not by express declaration, as the creed of the Church universal. Our Catechism, therefore, follows the organic division.

The supplementary titles of the three several parts, viz: Of our Creation, Of our Redemption, Of our Sanctification, are added, partly because that is the order of the Divine works concerning us, and especially because the Scriptures represent Creation as the official work of the Father, the First Person of the Godhead; Redemption as the official work of the Son, the Second Person; Sanctification as the official work of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person; but it must not be inferred that these divine adorable Persons operated each alone when performing their official works, since Creation is ascribed also to the Son as the eternal Word, and to the Holy Ghost as the efficient Agent; Redemption also to the Father, who sent the Son, and to the Holy Ghost who prepared and sealed the Immanuel for his mediatorship; and Sanctification also to the Father, who grants grace by the Holy Ghost, and to the Son, at whose intercession the grace is given; all which will be fully shown hereafter.

SECONDLY. *The fundamental doctrine underlying the*

whole Creed, which is: The existence of one God in three Persons.

An inquirer after truth might well put the question here suggested:

"Since there is but one only divine essence, why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?" But the answer is readily given on the best authority:

"Because God hath so revealed himself in his word that these three distinct Persons are the one only true and eternal God."

Here are three things stated: I. There is a God. II. There is only one God. III. There are three distinct Persons in the one only and true God.

I. There is a God. The word GOD is a radical found in several languages, (Persic, Goda; Hindu, Choda; Icelandic, Godi; German, Gott;) signifying One above all, or The Supreme. Many false or imaginary beings have been called and worshipped as gods by men; but that is not a true belief in God, which is not belief in the true God. Hence the Apostle denominated the Gentiles of his day Atheists, or, as our translation has it, "without God"; because, though they cultivated very many false gods, they had no knowledge of him who alone is God. It is requisite, therefore, that we understand what is meant by the word God; and the best definition we can give of God is: The self-existent, intelligent FIRST CAUSE of all things. Our Church, in commanding us to lecture on this section, did not require an elaborate proof of its several propositions, as that would be far beyond the compass of a single Lord's Day; but only that we should fairly present them preparatory to subsequent discussion. We must, then, be as succinct as possible. That there is a

God we know from his own declaration of himself; and from the existence of things constituting what is called nature.

A. From his own declaration of himself. The fact that we have the idea of God demonstrates in the highest degree both that he is and that our knowledge of him is derived from himself. The idea of God, according to the definition we have given, or, as set forth by the Scriptures, is infinitely above human imagination, and utterly beyond the scope of any argument human reason could frame. It has never had place in men's minds, except where divine revelation has communicated it; while the tendency of mankind, always and everywhere, except when restrained and enlightened by divine grace, has been to ignore and degrade it. Men without revelation have worshipped false gods, and attempted to demonstrate their existence, but they have never reached the idea of the true God. Therefore, since man could neither invent nor discover the grand idea, it must have been made known to us, and that by God himself. "The world by wisdom," *i. e.*, by its unassisted reason, "knew not God," asserts the Apostle. He cannot "by searching find out God," *i. e.*, "find out the Almighty unto perfection." That men in all ages and countries have had some notion of a superior being or beings whom they called God or gods, does not impugn our position, because their vague belief may very well be, and we learn from Scripture is, a corrupted tradition from the fathers of the race to whom God made himself known. (Romans i. 19.)

To this revelation of himself, God has added the irresistible evidence of his works; for

B. The existence of things can be accounted for only by the existence of God. We know that things do exist in that order and consistency which we call nature; therefore, they must have always existed, or they must have come into existence by chance, or they must have been caused to exist by the great, self-existent, intelligent Being, whom it becomes us to acknowledge and worship as God.

That the present frame of things has existed always is disproved by all analogy. In all the processes of nature we see none occur but what follows some precedent which we call cause, but the effective power is not in that proximate cause, for that cause is itself an effect of a cause which is again an effect, and so link by link we trace the chain backward. There must be an original, uncaused energy working through all these causes all these effects; for the first cause must be antecedent to nature, above nature, and independent of nature. Again: There is motion producing change in things as they exist. But matter of itself is inert; it does not move except from some force applied to it from without itself. There must, therefore, be a cause of motion, a source of impulse, a power determining change, above and antecedent to all things that suffer change. Yet again: This motion and change are regulated by certain laws, many of which are discovered, and these laws coöperate in the nicest adjustment to each other; this system of laws indicates design, there must, therefore, be a designer, or an intelligent cause, whose will is the supreme law antecedent to all these laws.

The supposition that things as they exist came into existence by chance, is as irrational as that they never had a beginning, and for the same reasons. We have

no knowledge of such a thing as chance. Law is present always and everywhere, and he is a most ignorant fool who ascribes any change to chance. How then could the entire system originate by chance? There is evident design in all things; but design indicates purpose, and purpose supposes intelligence; and an intelligent directing will can tolerate no chance.

If a printer were to enter his office in the morning, and find that the types which he had left in confusion the night before were so arranged that an impression taken from them presented to the reader a clear, profound, metaphysical argument, he would laugh to scorn the supposition that it was the result of mere chance. How much less than folly is the notion that the wonderful system of nature, and above all of *man* able to set types and write metaphysics, have come into existence by chance?

We are thus compelled to acknowledge the cardinal truth on which the whole system set forth by the Scriptures is based, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Let us, however, press the argument a little farther. Every one who reflects at all, must be conscious, that although in some sense, and to some extent, he is free, he is at the same time under a control from without himself which he cannot resist or escape. This consciousness, strongest in strongest minds, is so universal, that those so-called philosophers who have denied the being or government of God, substitute necessity or fate in his place; or, if they call it chance, it amounts to the same thing, for a blind chance over which we had no power, would be fate or necessity to us; but this necessity clearly works through laws; there must,

therefore, be a supreme intelligent will presiding over our intelligent wills, regulating the issues of all human agencies. Besides, we cannot deny that there are moral truths distinguishable from those which are natural, that is, which concern physical facts. As beings possessed of affections and reason, we are bound to each other by certain relations; these relations are under laws, conformity to which we denominate right; violation of which, wrong. We have notions of right and wrong, by which we approve ourselves when we do right, and condemn ourselves when we do wrong. We also see a connection between right and happiness, wrong and unhappiness. There may be differences of opinion on minor points, but in the essential, the sense of mankind is so general that there is no community without laws to punish wrong in order that the common welfare may be defended from the criminal selfishness of individuals. Whence, then, comes this moral system, the fact of which we confess, and the operation of which we imitate, if not from a moral source original, independent, and sovereign? The idea of God is absolutely necessary to our satisfaction. If there be no God, the universe is without superintendence, order, or government. There is no guide for our actions, no certainty, no right, no wrong, no truth, no hope. The soul of man is without security or satisfaction. Matter reverts to chaos, humanity is fatherless, and virtue with all her attendant train of blessings, a vision fair but unsubstantial as a poet's dream. God has pervaded the universe with the divinity of its origin, and planted in our very being the necessity of his own.

II. There is only one God.

"We know," writes the Apostle to his Corinthian

brethren, "that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." Evident as this appears to us, it was then a new doctrine at Corinth and throughout the inhabited earth except in Judea. There is not in all Christian lands a single sceptic who would assert a plurality of gods, or regard such an hypothesis as less than absurd. Yet the overwhelming fact is indisputable that the very large majority of mankind, from the farthest times down to the present day, have been polytheists, worshippers of more gods than one. The gods of the classical nations were innumerable, as are now the gods of Asia and Africa. The unity of God has never been taught but by revelation, and is the belief which distinguishes Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, from the heathen who fill the rest of the world. It should not, therefore, be considered useless for us to examine and declare the grounds of our belief, especially as we who hold the adorable mystery of the Trinity to be an essential part of the Christian system, (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Amen!) have been accused of denying the unity of God by some who arrogate to themselves the name of Unitarian, which belongs as truly to us as does that of Trinitarian. Our exposition shall, however, be as brief as is consistent with clearness.

By the unity of God, we mean that there is one and one only Being, to whom the name of God should be given, the works of God ascribed, the perfections of God attributed, and the worship of God rendered. This we assert.

I. From the Scriptures, which, because they teach the original and only clear notion of the divine exist-

ence, are worthy of the highest credence in all that relates to the nature of God.

a. God asserts it of himself. His first commandment is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The name by which he declared himself to Israel is sublimely significant of both unity and eternal existence: "*I am that I am.*" He identifies himself as the one God with the Creator: "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is none else;" also with the Judge and Saviour of all men: "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me; Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else;" as the Lord of providence: "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else;" and so with regard to every distinct attribute and operation of God.

b. His inspired worshippers throughout the Book, adore him as the one only God. Moses says: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;" David: "Thou art God alone;" all the prophets of the Old, and all the writers of the New Testament, combine in declaring the oneness of God as the characteristic belief of Jews and Christians; but why should we multiply quotations when our divine Master sums up the scriptural testimony, saying: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

II. We assert it from reason.

a. It is a rule of sound philosophy to rest satisfied with one sufficient cause for an effect; if, therefore, the God of the Bible with his boundless attributes be, as he is, infinitely sufficient for the causation of all things, it were absurd to inquire further. The only objection to this having the shadow of plausibility is taken from the actual existence of evil within the dominion of the Supreme Good, which difficulty, felt by all reflecting minds, gave rise to the most ancient extra-scriptural philosophy, that which recognized two contending principles, the good and the evil. The answer to this is, that although the good cannot be supposed to have produced evil immediately, yet it sprung from the freedom necessarily given to his moral creatures. Besides, evil is so intermingled with the good, that it could not have existed but through the permission of the Divine good; since none can doubt that he who has ordained with such wisdom the economy of things might, had he chosen, have excluded evil; and, in fact, no advocate of the dualistic system (that of The Two Principles) from the early followers of the Persic Zoroaster, down to the Manichean heretics, ever doubted the ultimate triumph of good over the evil, or the real supremacy of the good.

b. The infinity of the perfections attributed to God, excludes the possibility of more than one God, since there cannot be more than one infinity. For instance, omnipotence excludes all other power not derived from and controlled by itself; omnipresence, all existence not within itself; omniscience, all knowledge without itself. To suppose anything external to the divine causation or comprehension, is to deny that

infinity to God which is essential to the very idea of God.

c. The unity of the system of things, called for that reason the universe, demands our faith in one supreme will. Law is present everywhere, holding all the smallest and the greatest, the nearest and the farthest, in a grand harmonious whole. There is a countless variety of operations, the invariable order of which we call laws; but when we observe closely, we see these laws coalescing into, or combined under, fewer laws, those under still fewer, until we reach the necessity of one highest law combining all, the will of that One whom we adore as God.

d. Analogy confirms this reasoning; for in every arrangement of things there must be some presiding head; ultimate power must exist somewhere; government must be supreme. It is so in all human systems; it must be in that system which comprehends all systems.

e. Moral duty (without which there is neither right nor wrong, virtue nor vice) must have a supreme object. No man can serve two masters; yet from the multitude and variety of human relations, if we have not one master in God, we cannot know what duty is. Duties may clash with duties, and so cease to be duties; there must be one highest duty comprehending all duties, our duty to him who is the one Lord of all.

f. The wisest part of mankind, those who feel the logical necessity of following premises to conclusion, have been compelled, in effect, to acknowledge one Supreme. Even while dividing their worship among a multitude of deities, there has been traceable in their systems, popular or philosophical, a dependence from a

supreme original. The leading theological problem (of Proclus), "There is unity in all multiplicity," was admitted by all the theistical sects. Hence, though shrinking from what they deemed the impiety of giving a name or even a mode of being to the Head of all, they called Him *Tò 'Ev*, or The One; and he was the ultimate truth of all their speculations and mysteries. Even among the multitudinous idolatries of Hinduism, the Brahminical books dimly but really acknowledge an original source of all things, though they worship him not, and his existence is rather an unavoidable physical fact than a religious truth. In fact, idolatry has never been so much a denial of the One God, as a perversion of his worship, and a profane subdivision of his authoritative power under many names. They could not escape from the idea of the One God altogether; but they put as many false shadows between them and his all-seeing eye; as their sensual imaginations could invent. "They changed the truth of God into a lie."

Let us, then, ever devoutly remember the great goodness of God in giving us a clear revelation of himself in his holy Scriptures, without which, left to the imperfections of our own minds and the worse seductions of our sensual hearts, we could never have known him aright or offered him the worship that is his due. It is to the Bible that we owe that which distinguishes us from the heathen, who bow down to images their own hands have made; and only in the study of those Scriptures can we approach that Light which is the life of the soul.

Let us remember that the essence of idolatry is an unwillingness to retain God in our imaginations; and

that when we forget God, to place our trust, or to make the object of our conduct, other than in God alone, we are as really idolaters as the heathen who worship false gods, though far more guilty, because without their excuse.

And above all, let us remember that we cannot approach God or know him aright, but by faith in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," saith the Lord; "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Lord Jesus Christ, to whom shall we go but unto thee?"

LECTURE X.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY STATED.

EIGHTH LORD'S DAY.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY
STATED.

HAVING in our last discourse enforced the fundamental truths, I. That there is a God ; II. That there is only one God ; we now come to the third division of our subject, which embraces the all-important doctrine of the Trinity.

III. There are three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the one true and only God.

In the proper places, as we proceed with our exposition of the Catechism, we shall show out of Scripture, that the Father is God (Ninth Lord's Day) ; that the Son is God (Thirteenth Lord's Day) ; that the Holy Ghost is God (Twentieth Lord's Day) ; from which, since it has been demonstrated that there is only one God, it must follow irresistibly that these three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, coexist or subsist in the one God and as one God. Now, however, our aim, as required by the part of the Catechism under consideration, is to show what we mean by this subsistence of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in One God ; and this, not only for the confirmation of our faith, but also for the vindication of the doctrine from the false charges which ignorance or malice have brought against it.

Let no one turn away from this discussion, as though the doctrine were a mere technical mysticism, having no important bearing upon Christian belief, sentiment,

or practice. Our Lord commands his disciples first to "teach all nations," and then to baptize the converts to his Gospel; and the *formula* to be used in Baptism ("In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost") shows that the Gospel consists of the true doctrine concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; not of the Father only, but also of the Son, and also of the Holy Ghost; not of the Three only as One, but also of each of the Three as distinguished from the other two; so that any error respecting the doctrine of any one of the Three is fatal to a Christian belief. For example: If the Father only be God, and we ascribe divine honors to the Son or to the Holy Ghost, we are guilty of giving to others the homage due to God only; but, if the Son be God and the Holy Ghost be God, and we worship not the Son as God, and the Holy Ghost as God, we deny to the Son and to the Holy Ghost the divine homage which is their separate due. On each side we run into sin mortally offensive to God. Again: If these three names be only different titles of the same object, as that the Father is the same as the Son and the Holy Ghost, the Son the same as the Father and the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost as the Father and the Son, each of the Three not distinct from each of the other two, and we worship each of the Three as God, we are verily guilty of worshipping three gods, which is a blasphemous folly; but, if God has revealed himself as distinct in Three, — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, — and demands that homage be rendered to Father, to Son, and to Holy Ghost, as distinct in some real not nominal sense, then, by refusing this distinct homage to each or any one of the divine Three, we refuse to worship him in

the manner he requires, confounding what he declares is distinct in his divine nature.

Besides, the Scriptures clearly show that this distinction of Three, — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, — in One God, is not a mere technical mysticism, but that it underlies all the doctrines of salvation, pervading them with a divine energy, which, if they lacked, they would lose all warrant for our trust; since not only would many scriptural statements respecting the processes of redemption be utterly inexplicable, but also without the divinity of the Son there can be no sufficient ground for a vicarious atonement, and without the divinity of the Holy Ghost there would be no efficient agent for our new birth and internal sanctification; and we should revert to a faith, if faith it could be called, in a God without a Mediator, through whom the sinner may approach him and a quickening Power by whose help we may ascend the living way to life eternal. Experience confirms this in a most melancholy manner; for those who are so unhappy as to deny the proper divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, have with scarcely an exception rejected the doctrine of salvation by the blood of Jesus, and of a spiritual regeneration by the divine inworking. They may use the terms, but, if so, in a sense utterly apart from that of the evangelical Scriptures; nor will they deny that an error here on either side must go through all the Christian system.

Let it also be kept in mind from the outset that this distinction of Three, — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, — one God, is purely a doctrine of Scripture, and especially of the New Testament, as only from the interpreting light of the later books are we able to see any traces of it under the older covenant. We make no

argument in favor of it from reason or the light of nature; what some students, more enthusiastic than wise, have thought to be corroborations of it in the trinities of Platonism and eastern mythologies, though startling at first sight, we are compelled to reject as unworthy of parallelism with this article of our Christian faith. If we cannot find it in Scripture it is to be found nowhere. It is above the discovery of reason, though not contrary to reason when discovered, and could have been taught only by God himself, even by the Spirit which searcheth the deep things of God. He, therefore, who rejects the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith, need go no farther with us, as we shall not leave their sacred platform to contend on meaner ground.

Nor will it do for any to object in advance, that God would reveal nothing which is beyond the comprehension of human reason, and, therefore, that anything in the Scriptures which seems to teach this doctrine should be either torn out of the Book as spurious, or so interpreted as to be deprived of such meaning. That would be to make finite man the judge of divine truth; a monstrous assumption which limits the wisdom of the infinite God by our little capacity. Yet we freely admit that God would reveal nothing contradictory to human reason, for then he would be so inconsistent with himself as to demand from us a faith he had unfitted us to exercise; but at the same time we know that human reason is finite, cannot go beyond its sphere, and is very weak even within its proper limits; so that it is one thing for a doctrine to be above our comprehension, and another to be contrary to our understanding. A doctrine contrary to our reason is

false; as that a thing may be and not be at the same moment; but it does not follow that a doctrine above our reason is false, as any mystery of the divine nature. As well might I deny that nothing exists beyond what I can hold in the hollow of my hand, as that nothing is true beyond what I am able to comprehend by my mind; else ignorance would be the annihilation of truth, and the stupidity of the dunce who cannot understand the *Principia* of Newton would put aside the planetary system. There are many scientific truths certainly demonstrated that are utterly beyond the perception of uneducated men, nay, which seem to what they call common sense necessarily absurd; yet are they not the less true or the less conformable to right reason; and if this be the difference between the philosopher and a savage with regard to material things, what must be the difference between the best cultivated human mind and the mind of God respecting the mode of his infinite adorable existence? If he condescend to give us the highest proof of a doctrine, which is his own direct testimony, it is, then, the part of reason to receive it implicitly, however mysterious it may be.

Besides; it is one thing to know a fact, and another to know the mode of a fact. We know the fact of the needle's tendency to the pole; but who, as yet, has fully explained the reason of that phenomenon? There is no fact of which all men are more fully convinced than that we can control our muscles by a mere effort of will; yet what physiologist can explain how this control is put within the power of our will? A man who should deny either fact is a fool, and not a philosopher; but what is he who denies a fact in the divine nature, because he cannot measure God by his foot-

rule? If reason is at fault in its searches of our own mode of being, how may it judge absolutely of the divine? Let those follow the dim lamp of reason which they have lighted from the sun,—we will pursue no such dim glimmer; it goes out amidst the damps of death; it has never shone a foot beyond the grave; be it ours, my brethren, to uplift our souls to the Sun of Righteousness whose universal splendor so illustrates heaven and earth, that the believer, from the promises of time, gazes with realizing sense on the certain glories of his immortality.

Let us, then, who are convinced that the Scriptures are the testimony of God, study the doctrine of God by them revealed; and receive it as true because God teaches it. In other discussions we have premises from which to argue, and analogies with which to compare; but in this we have neither, for God is himself first of all, and infinitely above all parallel. The doctrine before us is one purely of faith in the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

After this preface, we go on to state in as precise language as we can the belief of the Reformed Churches respecting the subsistence of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in one God; termed by Theologians the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity,—Latin terms signifying Threeness in Oneness; or, more shortly, since all are agreed as to the unity of God, the Trinity,—by which is meant the coexistence of Three distinct Persons in one God.

The term Trinity is not found in the Scriptures, yet should not on that account be objected to, as it is used not to convey any new or extra-scriptural doctrine, but only to express in one word what would otherwise

require many. The advocates of the doctrine have been compelled to adopt this and some other terms by the subtle cavils and mischievous sophistries of its opponents; as Dr. Waterland says: "The early Christians easily believed that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name they were baptized, and whom they worshipped, were equally divine, without troubling themselves about the manner of it, or of reconciling it with their belief in one God; as men generally believe that God foreknows everything, and that man, notwithstanding, is a free agent, scarcely one, perhaps, in a thousand, concerning himself how to reconcile these two positions, or being at all apprehensive of any difficulty; so, probably, these plain honest Christians believed each of the Three to be God, and yet but one God, and troubled not their heads with any nice speculation about the mode of it. This seems to have been the artless simplicity of the primitive Christians till prying and pretending men came to start difficulties and to raise scruples and to make disturbances, and then it was necessary to guard the faith of the Church against such cavils and impertinences as began to threaten it. Philosophy and metaphysics were called in to its assistance, but not till heretics had shown the way, and made it, in a manner, necessary for the Catholics (orthodox) to encounter them with their own weapons. Some new terms and particular applications came in by this means, that such as had a mind to corrupt or destroy the faith might be defeated in their purposes." For the same reason, the language of some early writers who were firm believers in the true doctrine, differs from, and at first sight seems to contradict that of the later Church, but the discrepancy lies in the

meaning attached to these added terms in subsequent centuries.

1. We do not differ except from those who deny that God is one, or that the Father is God, that the Son is God, or that the Holy Ghost is God; and if we are not able to prove each of these propositions from Scripture we yield the controversy.

2. When we say that there is this distinction of Three in the Godhead, we mean that this distinction is real and not merely nominal; that is, these names are not several names of the Godhead, as Caius Julius Cæsar, are names of one man; nor are they used separately of the Godhead in reference to the several operations of the Divine will, as that God is called the Father, in reference to the Creation; the Son, in reference to the Redemption; the Holy Ghost, in reference to the Sanctification of man; but that, as the Scriptures teach, these three are so distinct from each other as to have relations to each other. It is absurd to speak of a being having relations to himself, because relativeness implies distinctiveness between those spoken of as related. Thus God cannot be said to send himself, or to be sent by himself, or to go forth from himself; yet the Father, in Scripture, is declared to send the Son, the Son to be sent of the Father, and the Holy Ghost to be sent from both. The Son and the Holy Ghost are said by the Scriptures to have coexisted with the Father at the time of the creation; for if it be said that the Father created the heavens and the earth, it is also said that he created the world by his Son, and that the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters; whence also God speaks as if there were more than one in council, when he said: "Let us make man;" *i. e.*, Let us,

Father and Son and Spirit, unite in making man. Us is plural though God is one; yet God said: "Let us," which indicates more than the Father. Hence it cannot be that Father means only God as Creator, since the Son and the Holy Spirit were also engaged in the work of creation. So also the Father is said to have coexisted and coöperated with the Son and the Holy Ghost in the work of Redemption: "God so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son;" the Son himself took part of flesh and blood; the Holy Ghost overshadowed the Virgin Mary, and she conceived that holy Thing which she brought forth of the Holy Ghost. Here are three separate acts imputed to three separate agents. Hence it cannot be that *Son* only means God as Saviour, since the Father and the Holy Ghost were also engaged in the work of salvation. So also the Father and the Son are said to coexist and coöperate with the Holy Ghost in the work of Sanctification: "When the Comforter (whom he declares in another place to be the Holy Ghost) is come," saith our Lord, "whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." The Apostle Jude speaks of those that are sanctified of God the Father; the writer to the Hebrews attributes sanctification to the Son, when he says: "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;" the Apostle Paul declares the converted Gentiles to be "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Here are then several agents in the one work; and in the first-cited text three separate acts in this one work; the Son praying the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Father sending the Holy

Spirit, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and testifying of the Son. Hence it cannot be that Holy Ghost is only the title of God as Sanctifier, since the Father and the Son are also engaged in the work of sanctification. The same council of Three which said: "Let us make man," said also, "Let us redeem man," and, "Let us sanctify him." To mark the error we are contending against, let us put the simple name of God in the place of the three personal names which it is asserted mean only God acting in each of his three great works, and it will strike you at once as absurd: God prays to God that he would send forth God; or again: God sanctifies through God by God; or again: through God we have access by one God to God. But how clear, and in accordance with Scripture, it is when we say: God the Father sanctifies through God the Son, by God the Holy Ghost.

3. When we assert that the Father then is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, we do not mean that there are three Gods, but that each is divine. For when we speak of one God, we mean by God one divine Being; but when we speak of each of the three as God, we do not mean the divine substance, but that each is divine or subsisting in, or partaking of, this divine Being or Essence, which is but the Latin synonym for Being. Thus the syllogism by which the Unitarian would drive us to absurdity, fails: "There is one God; but the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are each God; therefore there are three Gods;" for God in the minor is not of the same sense as God in the major. The true form of the syllogism is: There is one divine essence; but there are three that are divine; therefore there are Three in the one divine

essence; or, as the Catechism states it, "There are three distinct Persons in the one only true and eternal God;" by which is meant that each Person is divine, — God, but not the Godhead, — and that the Godhead is one but three Persons. Do any start from this as though it were impossible that three should be as one, and one as three; we bid them remember that God is infinite, and, therefore, as we cannot comprehend infinite, we cannot comprehend the mode in which the infinite God exists. Each man has in him a trinity: his body, his soul, and his animal life; yet is he one person. Even material substances may be composed of two, three, or many constituent elements, yet each substance so composed is, as respects its aggregation, one thing. Shall we then dare to deny that there may be three in the divine being of one substance?

4. But as we have employed the term *Person*, we must define what we understand by it, when the truth of the doctrine will be yet more apparent.

The term person is employed somewhat in an arbitrary sense, as it is not possible for the human mind to understand, or for any language to declare the distinguishing properties of the Three in the adorable Godhead. It assists, however, better than any other.

a. By person, we mean one possessed of a distinct understanding and will. Thus the Scriptures distinguish between the understanding of the Father, and that of the Son, and that of the Holy Ghost. "No man knoweth the Son," saith our Lord, "but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Again: "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit;" again: "God hath revealed them (the

things of the Gospel) unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Again, the Saviour saith: "He (the Holy Ghost) shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." It is clear that in these texts, not one but three are spoken of. So, also, is the will of the Father distinguished from the will of the Son, and that of the Holy Spirit from either. "I came down from heaven," saith the Saviour, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Again: "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt;" and in some aforementioned text, we read of God "knowing the will of the Spirit," and of the Spirit acting from his own will separately from the Father and from the Son. The will of each is ever in accordance with the will of the other two, so that the will of God is one; but as they each exercise will, they are distinct Persons.

b. We use *person*, to signify relative distinction. Hence we call I, thou, he, we, you, they, personal pronouns. Such personal relations the Scriptures declare exist in the Godhead. Thus, the Saviour saith; "I will pray the Father and he will send you another Comforter." Here the Son speaks, the Father is spoken to, and the Spirit is spoken of. We need not multiply passages though we might.

c. So, also, we use the word *person*, because we find distinct personal acts and offices attributed to each of the adorable Three. Thus the Father accepts, the Son redeems, the Spirit quickens.

d. But let it be carefully remembered that when we speak of Three Persons in the Godhead, we do not

mean that they are separate as three human or created persons are separate. This we deny; for they are of one essence or nature, not of the same common nature as three men are of a common humanity, but actually of one being, not three beings. Such a distinction is, we admit, incompatible with oneness in any finite being; but it is not incompatible with the Oneness of the infinite, because finiteness has parts, infinity must be ever one. We are not ashamed to confess that we cannot explain, for we do not know how these three Persons coexist as one Being, but we believe that they do, because the Scripture says that they do. If God could be understood by us, he would cease to be God; as an eminent thinker (Daniel Webster) is reported to have said: "The arithmetic of infinity is not for us to cipher."

Nor shall we attempt as some have done to illustrate these truths by other examples, because there can be no analogy; yet we might show the inconsistency of men who consider the Trinity of the Godhead contrary to reason, yet believe greater difficulties every day of their lives. Thus: A, B, and C, may be distinct from each other in a property, D, yet be one in a relation to E. The three sides of a triangle are distinct from each other and may be equal, yet they constitute one triangle. We do not contend that these cases are analogous to the Divine Trinity, yet, if there may be tri-unity in an algebraic formula, or a mathematical figure, who dare deny that it may in the Godhead? Again: The sovereign authority of an Italian city was once vested in a council, known by one name; that council was composed of three equal members; as respects the action *ad extra* (externally) of the council,

it was one; as respects the action of the three *ad infra* (or in their relation to each other) they were distinct. The illustration, we admit, is not complete, because the Supreme God is infinitely above any human authority; but does it not fully meet the objection that a tri-unity is impossible?

5. The Three Persons in the Godhead are equal each to each. On this we need not enlarge, for if our previous reasoning be received, the co-equality of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, must follow.

a. If each of the Three Persons be divine, each must be possessed of divine attributes; but the divine attributes are infinite, and infinity is not separable into parts; therefore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost must be equal, else one infinity would be greater than another infinity, which is impossible.

b. Divine worship is homage to the Supreme authority; and such worship is demanded for each of the Three divine Persons; therefore they must be equal, else they could not receive each the homage due to the Supreme.

c. If it be objected that the Scriptures of the New Testament often represent the Father as superior to the Son, and the Holy Ghost subordinate to both; we answer that all such passages will be, on examination, found to refer to the working out of the redemption, and describe not the original or natural relations of the Three to each other, but the official distinctions they have voluntarily assumed to each other in the remedial scheme: The Father, as the Representative of the Godhead; The Son, as the incarnate representation of man; and, therefore, in the form of servant to the

Father; the Holy Ghost as the efficient agent of both. In the essential constitution of the Godhead, they are, and have been from all eternity, and will be to all eternity, equal. Is it rejoined that the relation of a son to a father necessarily implies inferiority? We answer: Those names cannot be applied to the first two persons of the Godhead in the same sense as in the human relation, since the Son is eternally existent with the Father; but are used to indicate that the Son is of the same nature with the Father, as the begotten is of the same nature with the begetter. Neither is it true, that a son is necessarily inferior to the father, but only while under age; in adult years, a son takes his place by the side of his father, nay, comes to be, from the decrepitude of the aged parent, in every way besides that of affectionate reverence, superior to his father. The divine Father and the divine Son have no such changes, and therefore there is nothing in the terms Father and Son which supposes the one to be greater in authority than the other.

Here, for the present, we rest our exposition, the nice technicalities of which have been required to guard our faith from the uncandid attacks of its opponents.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

First: In all our studies of God, we should humble our reason at the feet of Divine Wisdom. What know we of God beyond what he has revealed of himself?

Secondly: We should confidently trust the great Three in One for our whole salvation; the Spirit for his sanctifying grace; the Son for his prevalent media-

tion ; the Father for his adopting love ; God the Spirit within us ; God the Father above us ; God the Son between us and God the Father.

Thirdly : We should ever thankfully adore with equal praises, The Father, The Son, and the Holy Ghost, — the One God, the God of our salvation.

LECTURE XI.

FAITH IN GOD THE FATHER.

NINTH LORD'S DAY.

FAITH IN GOD THE FATHER.

QUEST. XXVI. *What believest thou, when thou sayest: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"?*

ANS. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth and all that is in them; who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence) is for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and Father, on whom I rely so entirely that I have no doubt but he will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body; and that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me in this valley of tears turn out for my advantage; for he is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father.

IT is necessary here, and, indeed, throughout our study of the Catechism, to be mindful of what was stated at the beginning of our exposition, that the answers given are supposed to come from the mouth of a true Christian; and, therefore, not only is very strong language used, but, also, the order is rather that of Christian experience than of systematic theology. We shall not, however, err, if, in opening the truths taught by the section for this (Ninth) Lord's Day, and the one following, we do not confine ourselves to the course suggested by the words; but unite, as far as we can, the theoretical with the experimental, the doctrinal with the practical. You will also please to note, that the lesson for the Tenth Lord's Day is an expansion of this for the Ninth, and that the edifying inferences are from the whole, allowing us to reserve until our next Lecture several important things, which ought, otherwise, to be treated of to-day.

We are now to inquire (Quest. and Ans. 26th):

What a Christian professes when he says : "*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth*" ?

If we ascertain,

FIRST: *What is to be understood by the divine title : God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,*" we shall know,

SECONDLY: *What is the doctrine held by us when we assert this first article of the Creed.*

FIRST: *What is to be understood by the divine title : God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?*

In our last Lecture we took pains to show from the Scriptures, that there is One Divine Essence, and in the One Divine Essence three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Upon this distinction and order of Three Persons in the Godhead, as set forth in the formula for Christian baptism, our Christian Creed is founded. Hence the holy and reverend name of God is used to signify the one divine Being in Three Persons, and also each of the Three Persons as divine. Therefore, this first article of the Creed relates to God the Father, the First Person in the ever-adorable Godhead.

It was also shown that, while the distinction of Three in the one God is eternal, the mode of their co-existence is utterly beyond our comprehension ; but when the names, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are used with reference to the plan of redemption, they have a significance which we can better understand ; and, as the Christian Creed is meant to set forth specially God in our redemption, it is of the First Person that we here speak of as God, the Father, and of him as engaged with God the Son and God the Holy Ghost in the economy of saving grace. In that economy, according to the eternal counsel and covenant of the Three

Divine Persons, each assumes his peculiar office ; and while the Son executes the work necessary for our redemption, and the Holy Ghost applies the benefits of that work to the believer, the Father is constituted the representative of the Godhead and vindicator of its honors ; and, therefore, *officially* the source and end of the scheme, to whom we must go for acceptance through the Son by the Holy Ghost ; as the Apostle says : "Through him (*i. e.* Christ) we have access by one Spirit to the Father."

You will observe, however, that, by a difference in punctuation, this article may read : I believe in God ; the Father Almighty, etc., *i. e.* I believe in God, viz : in "the Father, and in . . his only begotten Son, . . . and in the Holy Ghost." According to this reading, the Creed asserts first the unity of God, in opposition to those heretics who contended for more gods than one, and in refutation of those who reproach believers in the Trinity with believing in three Gods. There is in the history and comparison of the Creed, as adopted by different portions of the earlier church,* some little ground for this view ; but as the difference is not essential, and as we have already proved the unity of the true God, we shall adopt the ordinary acceptance.

With this preface we proceed. *God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

Here are several titles of the First Person in the Godhead combined : The I. absolute, God ; the II. relative, The Father ; the III. characteristic, Almighty ; the IV. executive, Maker of heaven and earth.

* See King and others on The Creed.

I. *God*. — This is an absolute term for that ineffable mode of being in which God exists alone, independently of all his creatures, offices, and acts. For although, because of his authority over us, and of our derivation of all we are and have from him, we are accustomed to consider God in connection with his infinite sovereignty, and the effects of his will; he would be not the less God if there were no being animate or inanimate in the universe but he. We can, therefore, attempt no definition of the word God, used thus absolutely. He himself has given us none. "I am that I am," said he to Moses; and again by the prophet: "I am Jehovah (THE LORD), and besides me there is none else." The composition of the name Jehovah has the same meaning, — being of two words signifying existence, — existing; which ought not to be considered as implying his eternity, but the mode of being in which he is eternal. Josephus calls Jehovah "the shudder-causing name of God;" and the Jews never pronounced it, such was their awful reverence for its inscrutable meaning.

We need not stay to prove this essential Divinity or Godship of the Father, seeing that it is disputed by none, — Jew, Mohammedan, Arian, Socinian, or Sabellian, — who contend against us only because we impute personal divinity also to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, but all are united with us in calling the Father God.

II. *God, the Father*. — Father is a relative term, implying that there is one or more of whom, or to whom, a father is father. We use it to signify the author of life in a conscious being, as a man is of the child he has begotten, or the Creator of men and angels. This is its first and radical sense.

From this it comes to signify one who extends over

another or others such care as a father has for his offspring. So Job was "a father to the poor," because he felt for their wants and supplied them. Often it implies instruction, as followers of an eminent teacher (Socrates, for example) address him as their father; and as the apostles Paul and John call those whom they instruct their children. It also may include government and protection, as kings are spoken to by their subjects by the name of Sire; and as our Indian tribes call our President their Great Father.

It may, therefore, designate a natural relation, an affectionate relation, or an authoritative relation; and these three senses may be combined by the word.

When we speak of God the Father, we may use the phrase with one of two references. 1. We may speak of the First Person of the Trinity in his relation to the other two Persons, but particularly in his peculiar relation to the Second; as when it is said: "God sent forth his Son;" and Christ says: "I go unto my Father." Or, 2. We may speak of God the Father in the relation which he, with merciful condescension, sustains to his intelligent creatures, and especially through Christ to the new creatures of his grace. Thus the Catechism here: "I believe that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . is, for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and Father."

1. We speak of the First Person in the Trinity in his relation to the other two, but particularly his peculiar relation to the Second, who is called the Son.

The Three Persons in the Godhead are, as we took pains in a former discourse to show, originally and essentially equal. They are divine; and, as Deity is essentially supreme, there can be no natural superiority

of one over another. They are divine; and, as Deity is essentially self-existent, therefore eternal, no one could be before another; they must have coexisted from all eternity. As the Father is eternal, so is the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. But in the Scriptures the First Person is called the Father; the Second, the Son; the Third, the Holy Ghost, is spoken of as sent from both.

Yet, as we have seen, these relations cannot, from the essential properties of the Holy and Divine Persons, imply any difference in rank or order of being. They are relations we cannot understand, the mystery arising from the incomprehensibility of God by our finite minds. The terms employed by theologians, as "eternal generation" and "procession," and the like, though useful as technicalities of science, really throw no light on the subject; nor can they themselves be farther explained, although the offices which the several Persons hold in the redemption are clearly distinguishable.

It is, however, to the Second Person that the First bears, peculiarly, the relation of Father. As Jehovah said unto David, the royal type of Christ, and, therefore, according to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, prophetically of Christ himself: "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son;" and again in the Second Psalm, which we know on the same authority (and from the strain of the Psalm itself) refers also to Christ, God says by solemn decree: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." "This day"—that is in eternity;—from all eternity he is the only begotten Son of God the Father.

a. He is his Father, because of that ineffable relation subsisting between them in the Godhead.

b. He is his Father, because the Begotten is of the same nature with the Begetter.

c. He is his Father, because the Son is appointed to appear acknowledged as the representative to receive honor in his Father's name.

d. He is his Father, because, by the Holy Ghost, he begat his human nature in a miraculous manner.

e. He is his Father, because he raised him up from the dead, so giving him a renewed life.

f. He is his Father, because he constitutes him the head of that spiritual family which he has adopted for the sake of the Son, from among the fallen race of men.

For all these reasons, the Catechism speaks of God the Father as the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; eternal, because himself eternal; eternal, because from all eternity the Father of the Second Person, who, at the fulness of time, became incarnate for us.

2. In using the title God the Father, we may speak of the First Person in the relation he sustains to his intelligent creatures.

a. God the Father is our Father, because he is the author of our being. He created us as he created all things. We came into existence only through the efficient *fiat* of his will. The Son and the Holy Ghost coöperated with him in the divine work; for the Son is the Eternal Word by whom the worlds were made, and "without whom there was not anything made that was made;" and the Holy Ghost was the Spirit that moved on the face of the chaotic deep, and that breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life; yet, as we are taught to recognize in the First Person the representative of the combined honors of the Godhead, we ascribe

to him the official work of creation through the Word by the Holy Spirit.

b. He is our Father, because he is our Teacher, having given us intelligent souls, and instructing us by his works, his Word, and his Spirit.

c. He is our Father, because, knowing the wants of our nature, physical and moral, he feels for us, watches over us, and supplies us with that which we need.

d. He is our Father, because he is, in the same manner, our Protector, so that nothing can affect us but by his order or permission; while, as our Sovereign Ruler, he insists upon our entire obedience, chastening us when we stray, and punishing us if we be obstinately impenitent.

In these senses God is a Father to all his intelligent creatures, though his chastening of those who err belongs more properly to the dispensation of grace.

But, as the First Person is peculiarly the Father of the Second Person, who became incarnate as the Lord Jesus Christ, so is he in a peculiar manner the Father of penitent sinners among men, who, believing on Christ, the appointed Saviour, are represented by Christ the Son of God. We have by our sins forfeited our original right and natural claim to our Maker's regard, and, having lost the image of God, there is in us nothing correspondent to the divine holiness. Before we can be restored to our primeval estate of favor, our sins must be expiated; we must have a new righteousness which may recommend us to his approval; we must have a new nature in which we can hold communion with him. That expiation he has provided for us by the death of Christ; that righteousness has been wrought out for us by the active obedience of Christ;

that new nature is created in us by the Spirit of Christ, the divine image being renewed in our souls. These benefits become ours the moment that we receive them and apply them to ourselves by faith in Christ, which is an acceptance of him as our atoning Mediator with the Father, and a reliance on his merits alone for our justification in the sight of God. This faith unites us to Christ; he becomes our Head, we become members of his body. We are then found in him; we in him look to God; God looks upon us in him; and, as Christ is the Son of God, we become by him children of God.

We are his children, because we are begotten again by his power; because we have the right (a right through grace, but still a right) of children; and because God formally, absolutely adopts us as his children, making us objects of his affectionate care, instruction, and discipline, reflections of his image, and heirs of his kingdom above. "To as many as received him (*i. e.* Christ), to them gave he power (prerogative) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

III. God, the Father *Almighty*. — This title, characteristic of his power, is in some versions of the Creed joined to "Father," in others to "Maker of heaven and earth;" but the difference is little whether we speak of God as the Father Almighty or as the Almighty Creator, since our Father and the Creator are one and the same, — our gracious and faithful Lord God. He could not be the Creator were he not almighty; nor could he be our Father were he not the Creator. It is his boundless power which warrants and demands our sole and entire trust in him, according to his promises of merciful love through Jesus Christ his Son and Lord.

When we say that He is *almighty*, we mean that he can do what it pleases him to do, and prevent what it pleases him to prevent, and overrule what any of his creatures may do in disregard of his authority, for his own ends and his own glory. It is worse than idle and impertinent to ask if God can do anything inconsistent with his holiness, or anything not conformed to the nature of things which he has ordained. It pleases him to do nothing of the sort; it is morally impossible that anything inconsistent can occur in his acts; but his power is limited only by his will. How great his power is we cannot know, for it is infinitely above our thoughts; yet, that it is unbounded, we easily discover in his acts. He who can make the least thing out of nothing, must be able to make what he pleases out of nothing; and he who has thus made all things must be able to control all things. Think what power there is in that will which at once brought all things into existence; which since maintains them in existence, and repeats or multiplies many of them by such nice, gradual, wonderfully adapted laws and instrumentalities. What power there is in the wind, the fluxes of the waters, the expansion of heat, the contraction of cold, the electric fire, and the magnetic attraction! What power there is in the motion of all the radiant worlds throughout all space, and their restraint to their harmonious orbits by the centrifugal and centripetal forces! What power there is in the upheaving from the soil of the vegetating seeds that cover the earth with verdure, and the vital sap that nourishes and perfects plant and shrub and vine and tree! What power there is in the strength put forth by all animated beings! Think, also, that this power is irresistibly exerted and felt at

once, constantly, everywhere! Yet is all this power his. Nay, these are parts of his works; and we know but a small portion of the vast effects which result from his will; nor can we deny that he who has done, or is doing, what we now must ascribe to God, may, if it pleases him, accomplish infinitely more. In a word, his power has no bounds; he is almighty.

IV. *Maker of heaven and earth.*—This we have called an executive title, because it represents God the Father not merely possessed of infinite power, but as exerting it in the first great work of his will, which is the basis or beginning of all his system of operations, at least of all that concern our race.

The making of heaven and earth by God the Father Almighty, is so vast a subject that to discuss or even speak of all the things which closely relate to it, would exhaust the longest lifetime; and, if the pen were employed, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." We must, therefore, confine ourselves to a statement of a few general heads, under which all may be arranged, with such brief comments as are required for our practical use of the matter, and shall treat 1st, Of the making; 2d, Of what was made; 3d, Of the time of the making.

1st. Of the making. The translators of the Creed into our vernacular have evidently endeavored to use, as far as possible, purely English words, for the better understanding of the common people; and, here, have chosen the verb *to make* as the only Saxon one by which the idea can be at all expressed. Yet *making* does not give the whole sense implied; for a man *may* make various things out of material supplied to his hand, while here is intended an act of sovereign om-

nipotence. Nor is it true that either the Latin, Greek, or even the Hebrew words rendered here by "made," signify, radically, any more. Still, our word "create," formed from the Latin, is universally used by us, especially by theologians, to convey the sense of entire origination, or, when applied to the great fact before us, of *making out of nothing*; and so we shall use it. The insufficiency of the terms of the other languages should not, however, prejudice us against the idea of the origination by God, because the Romans and Greeks, being heathen, had no notion of what we mean by creation, and thought that matter was eternal; while the Hebrew has few radicals, and Moses took the one nearest to the full sense. The Jews, however, universally understood the making to be out of nothing; indeed, such belief in the divine origination of all things, distinguishes those who enjoy the benefits of a written revelation from all others. The writer to the Hebrews puts beyond doubt the belief of both Jews and Christians on the subject, when he says: "Through faith (*i. e.* reliance on divine testimony), we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, (or speech of God, *ῥήματι*, not *λόγω*), so that things which are seen (*visible*) were not made of things which do appear (*i. e.* are distinguishable);" meaning, as Chrysostom observes, things that are were made of things which are not (see 1 Cor. i. 28; *τὰ μὴ ὄντα . . . τὰ ὄντα*), that is, of nothing. Besides the notion that matter itself has not originated from God's supreme will, would impeach the divine almightiness, since that which had existence without his will must continue to be, in some degree, beyond his power. When, therefore, we read that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," we understand that he made them out of nothing.

2d. What was made. The verse just cited tells us, "The heaven and earth." The only question arising here is respecting what is meant by "heaven;"* whether it signifies the heaven of the divine Presence, with the various orders of angelic spirits whose abode is there, — or what we call heaven, intending the sky and the starry worlds which we call the heavenly bodies. The Rabbinical opinion is that it means the former, and this is followed by most divines; but the latter idea, confining it to the visible heaven, has, at least, a strong probability for several reasons. In the first place, the scriptural history throughout relates to this world, or rather to the Church in this world; and what concerns other worlds, which are the abodes of happy or lost spirits, is spoken of with great reserve, and only when necessary to the development of facts bearing on the Church and the future state of men. Then, again, the account is everywhere else of the physical creation, except where the spiritual nature of man and his moral condition (in the image of God) are stated. So the writer to the Hebrews, speaking of what we know by faith respecting the creation, says: "the things that are seen." Besides which, the Jews (and the sacred language is conformable) believed that there were three heavens: the earth's atmosphere (as we say the fowls of heaven); the supernal atmosphere, or what we should call the space beyond; and the third heavens, or heaven of heavens, which last is rarely, if ever, without some distinguishing epithet, alluded to by the sacred writers. Certainly, this view of the subject relieves us from many embarrassments; as we believe firmly that all creatures in heaven as well as on earth,

* Or heavens; the word is plural.

came forth from the almighty will; and only confine the sense of the word heaven or heavens in the text before us.

3d. The time of the making. The present theories of geologists and others have introduced large discussions on this point; and Christian inquirers have sometimes ventured dangerously far through anxiety to reconcile the inspired account with scientific opinion. There can be no doubt that, if our knowledge of facts were sufficient, revelation and science would be, in every respect, agreed; but, as firm believers in the Divine testimony, we should never consent to try the truth of Moses by the deductions of philosophers. Science is progressive, and, therefore, imperfect, and, therefore, fallible. The present hypothesis of geologists is scarcely half a century old, being based on facts until then undiscovered; it is itself contradictory to the hypothesis of the same science in the centuries before; so that they who insist upon modern views would themselves laugh at us were we to attempt the trial of the sacred story by what was once science, but now is exploded. Yet, since such changes have been made in science by facts discovered lately, who can assert that no new facts shall be discovered to-morrow, or fifty or a hundred years hence, which will change as entirely the scientific opinion as it has been before? We do not doubt the accuracy of the facts which the geologists state; but we doubt their theoretical deductions, because we doubt the sufficiency of their facts to warrant an absolute conclusion, as one new fact may change the whole combination. We shall, therefore, adhere to the Word of God, let other men argue as they please. Still, as the Mosaic account

does not enter into questions of science, but is meant for the general mind of men, our interpretation of its language should be correspondently liberal, though not licentious to a degree that would impeach its fundamental accuracy.

Thus we read that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." When "the beginning" was, is not stated; and it may very well be a general comprehensive statement of an original fact, viz: the creation of the substance out of which the present order of things was framed; and not necessarily included by the first day. Nay, this might seem to be intimated by the statement that the earth was without form and void until the subsequent mandates of Jehovah were issued. If this interpretation be received, we can consistently allow the possibility of the substance of things having existed long before; and that, antecedent to the present constitution, other forms had been given to such substance; a supposition, not forbidden, which would go far to meet the main objections derived from facts discovered in the deeper parts of the earth; while the fluxes and changes of the waters of which Moses speaks are confirmed by the facts of science.

Again; some, from motives stated a little while ago, have contended that "the day" in six of which "all things were made," does not mean a day of twenty-four hours, but a period of time including, it may be, centuries or thousands of years; but, when we read closely, such an assumption is unwarranted; for Moses expressly limits by night and day, as we do our day — "the evening and the morning were the first day," and so with the other five; and, besides, on the seventh

day he rested, and from that fact he ordained then, and on Mount Sinai, the sacredness of the Sabbath to his honor. It will not, therefore, do to make "the day" indefinite when reading one verse, and confine it to twenty-four hours when reading another. The same rule must measure each and all of the seven.

In few words, then, we understand by the account given in Genesis, just so much, no more, no less, as an ordinary yet cautious and reverent reader would understand by it; that God in the beginning made all things out of nothing, and that in six days he gave to matter the form which it now has, and created man body and soul to be the inhabitant of the world, and the vicergerent of God over all things that are in the earth.

We now know,

SECONDLY: *The doctrine held by us when we assert this first article of the creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

The catechumen is made to speak in the first person (I believe), because he is addressed personally and required to state his own personal faith and convictions; yet in adopting the creed of the true Catholic Church, he declares his adherence to the principles of faith held by the whole Church, and, therefore, that what the creed teaches concerning himself is equally applicable to all genuine Christians.

Some commentators are unnecessarily anxious to insist upon the difference between "believing" and "believing in," as if "believing" were simply recognizing a truth to be true, and "believing in" implied trusting in or relying upon that truth. Such a distinction is, however, by no means universal when these terms are employed; yet, as was shown in our dis-

course on Saving Faith (21st Question and Answer), sincere belief in the blessed truths here set forth, must be accompanied by a cordial reliance upon them.

The answer of the catechist (to the 26th Quest.) declares the main Christian doctrine here professed: "I believe" "*that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . is, for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father.*" This is the doctrine of *Adoption*; which includes two things: —

I. The relation which God, represented by the First Person of the Godhead, the Father, graciously bears to all, who through faith are represented by the Second Person, the Son, incarnate as the Saviour of sinners; and,

II. The spirit or disposition, which all those thus adopted bear to God as his children.

I. The relation which God, represented by the Father, the First Person of the Godhead, graciously bears to all, who through faith are represented by the Second Person, the Son, incarnate as the Saviour of sinners.

All that God was to man before he fell, he is now graciously, and in a more eminent degree, toward sinners through Christ his Son. The reconciliation, by the infinite merits of the Saviour is complete; and in honor of his Son, he advances the believer to far higher honors than man, though he had continued holy, could ever have won by his own righteousness. God renews the sinner whom he calls to a new life, by begetting in him a new nature through the word of his Gospel which the Holy Ghost applies. But this life, though, like the life given in his first creation, it bears the image of God, yet, unlike that, is not liable to be lost, but is derived from God through the divine Son to whom he

is vitally joined by faith, as a member of the body of which Christ is the Head; and is maintained in him by the constant power of the Holy Spirit. Hence the Master says: "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly;" again: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man (*i. e.* any one) pluck them out of my hand;" and again, addressing his Father: "Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." The new life is as infallible and incorruptible, therefore eternal, as is the union of the believer to the Son, and as is the favor of the Son with the Father. As the Son by the power of the Holy Ghost partakes of our human nature, so the believer, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, is (using the strong language of the Apostle Peter) "partaker of the divine nature."

For the same reasons, and in the same manner, is the fellowship between God and the believer more intimate and full. The Son is near to the Father; the believer to the Son. The word of truth is enlarged for his benefit; the communications of divine knowledge far greater, things hidden from the foundation of the world, and things of the world to come, are revealed; and, especially, does the Holy Spirit, the Illuminator, dwell in him, enabling him to hear and understand the language of the Father's love to his soul; while the privilege of prayer based on the merits of Christ, and inspired by the Spirit of Christ, is equally enlarged, so that he has access with the affectionate boldness of a dear child to the throne of grace.

So, also, with his inheritance. It is as superior to God's original bestowal on innocent man, as Christ's mediatorial righteousness is to any possible righteousness of man. The eternal life which Christ gives, and the communion which God allows, demand for their full consummation, a higher, purer, more glorious and enduring sphere than this world will permit. God first gave man the earth; now he gives him heaven. Christ came from heaven to dwell with the believer, and he returns to heaven that the believer may dwell with him there. Christ's home as the Son of God is in heaven; there is the place of his highest dignity and honor; and there is the believer's home as the child of God in Christ, and there will he share in all the dignity and honor of his Elder Brother forever.

But as sin yet lingers in the believer's soul, and the effects of sin are in his body, there is a necessity of a purifying process before he is fit to enter upon the perfection of his bliss. Hence, the salutary discipline which God by affliction, exerts upon the believer's soul. Even Christ, though sinless, yet as the Head of a sinful Church, and partaker of all our infirmities except sin, yet "as a Son, learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" and as the Apostle says: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be glorified together." Thus, even trial is a most blessed proof of God our Father's love, "that the trial of our faith being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

II. The spirit or disposition of the adopted ones to

God as their Father, is correspondent to the privileges of the adoption. It is stated in the answer before us. He believes and asserts, "that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that in them is) who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence, is, for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely that I have no doubt but that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me in this valley of tears, turn out for my advantage; for he is able to do it, being Almighty God; and willing, being a faithful Father."

1. Here is a spirit of reverence, for who can so approach the holy and infinitely majestic God without deep awe! An affectionate, yet humble fear, is a necessary characteristic of a child of God. It includes, also, a spirit of obedience, for now there is a double claim upon his service; the claim of God as his Creator, and the claim of God as his loving Father in Christ. He belongs wholly to God his owner, and now his Redeemer in Christ, the author of his natural life, and the author of his spiritual eternal life. How can he hesitate to believe the commands of such a Father to be wise and kind? How can he hesitate to obey that divine Father who is so merciful to him in this life, and has provided for him such a glorious bliss in the life to come? For the same reason it includes submission and resignation to all God's dispensations, since God has a right to do what he will with his own, and the heavenly Father will do nothing hurtful to his child.

2. But here is, also, the spirit of confidence. God, the Almighty Maker of all things, must be the Disposer of all things; therefore, all things are his to order as

he pleases. Thus assured of his power, the believer is, also, sure of the willingness of God to do all things necessary and profitable for his best good, because God is his faithful Father. Therefore, he is "not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in God." He dreads no want, for all things are in his Father's hand. He quails before no enemy; his Father is stronger than all that can be against him. He shrinks from no trial in the path of his duty, for he knows that the angel of the covenant is in the midst of the flame; and, when called to die he is triumphant, for he can say: "Now, O Father, I come to thee." "All things are yours," says the holy Paul, . . . "the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Thanks to thee, O blessed Father, for such an adoption! Thanks to thee, O blessed Son, for thy merits, which commend us to God! Thanks to thee, O blessed Holy Spirit, by whose grace we draw nigh to God's embrace! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks eternal, O blessed Trinity, God of our life, God of our mercies, God of our hope!

And O, grant when all thy children are brought home safely to thy heavenly house, there may be wanting not one of all these before thee this day!

Amen.

LECTURE XII.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

TENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

QUEST. XXVII. *What dost thou mean by the Providence of God?*

ANS. The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

QUEST. XXVIII. *What advantage is it for us to know that God has created, and by his Providence doth still uphold all things?*

ANS. That we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity; and that in all things which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from his love; since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move.

THE lesson of the Ninth Lord's Day sets forth two principal things which must be kept in mind for a better understanding of the lesson before us: 1. That God, the Creator of all things, is the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and 2. That he is, for the sake of his Son, the God and Father of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour; from which truths we were taught to infer the duty and privilege of relying confidently and entirely on his almighty and gracious will, as the certain source of all things requisite for body and soul, for time and eternity. But that this eminent comfort of the believer might be fully assured, there must be added to the fact of creation by God alone, the consequential fact of his all-wise, supreme, and unceasing government over all he has made. This constant and universal government, the Catechism,

agreeably to general usage, has in the 26th Question and Answer called *Providence*, and

The doctrine of Divine Providence, with the Practical Lessons which it suggests, is the subject for our study to-day.

The doctrine is stated in the answer to the 27th Question; the lessons are given in that to the 28th.

FIRST: *The doctrine of Divine Providence.*

We unhesitatingly and thankfully adopt the statement of it supplied by our Church:

"What dost thou mean by the Providence of God?"

"The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand."

Following this our guide, we are to consider: I. The signification of the phrase; Providence of God. II. The fact of such Providence. III. The extent of Divine Providence. IV. The particularity of Divine Providence.

I. The signification of the phrase: Providence of God.

1. The word *providence* occurs only once in the Scriptures, where Tertullus, opening his action against Paul, and addressing Felix, says: "Very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence," that is, by the vigor and skill of his administration; but Christians have universally adopted it, or its equivalent, in their several languages, as aptly descriptive of the great work here ascribed to God.

It is taken from the Latin, and by its etymology

means foresight, not merely in the sense of seeing before (as then it would be *previdence* or *prescience*) but in the sense of taking care* for the future, or rather an ordering of things and events after a predetermined intelligent plan; which supposes wisdom to devise and power to execute.

2. In the divine mind there is, properly speaking, neither past nor future, hence by the Providence of God we understand his supreme disposition of his creatures according to the infinitely wise counsel of his own will. Thus it is not only an operation but an economy; and when the Catechism here speaks of "the almighty and everywhere present power of God," it means the sovereignty of God systematically, constantly, and universally active, "whereby (as it were by his hand) he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures;" or as the Westminster Assembly's Catechism has it: "His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions."

II. The fact of such a Providence.

1. The testimony of Scripture to Providence is so general, explicit, and strong, that the citation of particular texts is hardly necessary. It is the joy of all believers to know that the Lord reigneth, and that "he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth;" that his doings are neither capricious nor uncertain, but that "known unto the Lord are all his works from the beginning," because he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But for his Providence, where would be the govern-

* Such is the classical force of *pro* in composition.

ment everywhere ascribed to him? Where the truth of the prophecies he inspired holy men to utter? Where the faithfulness of his promises on which he encourages us to rely? Where the certainty of his rewards proposed to the obedient, or of his penalties threatened against the transgressor? All his declarations are based upon his efficiency to carry out his determinations; so that without Providence there can be no order, no confidence, no justice, no hope.

2. Reason abundantly confirms the testimony of Scripture; from

A. (*à priori*.) The being, perfections, and creation of God.

a. When we admit the existence of God, we admit his sovereignty. It enters into our definition of God. Take away the idea of supreme rule from him, and you have denied what is meant, what all understand, by God.

b. It is necessary to his power; for latent power in a being, whom we can know only by his manifestations of himself, is, for us, all the same as inertness. It is necessary to his wisdom; for without application in the exercise of his power, it is equally undiscoverable. It is necessary to his moral attributes of holiness and goodness; for how can we conceive of a being worthy of adoration, service, and trust, who gives no evidence of regard for justice, or affection for his subjects?

c. And this the more since we know the fact of his creation. Was the construction from nothing of this vast, complicated, harmonious system of things, a mere passing amusement for its Maker, a mere caprice, an idle, purposeless stroke of his hand, that he should cast it aside when done, as unworthy of his farther care?

Has he called into conscious being so many intelligent creatures, dependent for knowledge and happiness upon circumstances utterly above their management, to leave them in their weakness, blindness, and yearning anxieties, the sport of chance, the prey of necessity, the victims of ignorance? Will the divine Father abandon his children? Will the Author of all things despise the works of his own hands?

B. (*à posteriori*.) The frame and order of the universe, physical and moral.

a. When we observe, though superficially, the nature of things around us, and with which we have necessarily more or less to do, we cannot fail to see that there is a systematic arrangement by which very many things, each having its peculiar characteristics, are combined as a harmonious whole; and that, though there are continual changes and successions, the original organization is maintained by an all-pervading energy, operating uniformly through what are popularly denominated causes, or as we prefer to say, according to certain laws. These great facts, though at once obvious, are more fully apparent, the farther and more closely we investigate. It is, in fact, the whole object and business of science, through all its departments, to discover these laws and bring them within the reach of our uses; for it is upon our conformity to these laws that our welfare depends. These laws, being applied by special adaptations to the many various things in their various purposes, seem, at first sight, to be almost innumerable; each (so called) kingdom of nature, animal, mineral, and vegetable, nay, each thing in each of those kingdoms, being under a peculiar regulation, yet when followed out, coalesce into fewer, as we see them pervading all, until we reach

a point where they converge, compelling the logical conviction, that there is one law supreme over all, one grand centre from which they all radiate. What is that grand source, that sovereign law, but the will of the Creator? For nothing is more clear than that no one of those phenomena (or appearances) which are styled causes, has in itself the force to produce what is called its effect, since it is itself an effect of a cause preceding it, and so backward as far as we can trace the succession. There must be, therefore, an original single force operating through all these coöperating, never conflicting causes. But is it not equally clear that these laws of operation proceed from an intelligent will? — And as these laws are operative throughout all things, combining them as a consistent whole, that that intelligent will is imperial, supreme, and one? If no one thing, or change of a thing, occurs by chance, or produces itself, or is independent of the rest, or can be separated from the whole, but all are subject as parts or as combination, to law, how could the entire system have come by chance, or produced itself, or in any way exist, but from the energy of an almighty, all-wise Will? If so, is not the same almighty, all-wise Will which was necessary to create, yet more necessary to maintain the organization, since the act of creation was an instant exercise of omnipotence, while in the continuance of the moving system the impelling force is constant? And, if so, are there not stronger reasons for the Divine will to maintain it than there were for its creation; since not to maintain would be to destroy the wonderful structure which has been called into existence out of nothing? The skilful arrangements, everywhere seen, for the continuance of the economy, prove

the design of the Creator that it shall be continued until the purpose of the creation is reached; and the equally certain fact that these arrangements are *not* themselves causes, or of themselves efficient, but simply methods through which the almighty will operates, proves that the Divine power is and shall be constantly put forth in its continuance. To sum up our brief argument: The order of natural things demonstrates their having been created by the almighty all-wise God; therefore, the active continuance of that order must be maintained and governed by God alone.

b. A similar course of reasoning proves the providence of God over moral beings and events. That there is a distinction between right and wrong, that God has created conscious intelligent beings, whose conduct must be either right or wrong, and that their welfare individually and collectively is inseparably connected with such, their moral conduct, no one will soberly pretend to deny. The inference, however, is irresistible that there is a system of moral things as there is a system of things physical; and that, as there can be no such thing as chance, the order of moral events is presided over by the same almighty, all-wise will which has ordained the connection between moral actions and their retributory consequences. God, by his creation of moral beings, has put himself at the head of the moral economy; and no moral event can occur outside of his will, that is without his determination, except through his indifference or impotence. That he is indifferent to what so intimately concerns the welfare of his creatures, it were impious denial of his character to assert; that he is unable to exercise such control, is as inconsistent with his essential almigh-

teness ; but, as the moral events which concern his moral creatures are intimately and systematically connected with their moral conduct, so their moral actions must as certainly be within the control of his sovereignty. This we argue farther from the fact that men, for the most part, if not always, immediately or more remotely, make use of physical things in carrying out their moral purposes ; and, therefore, if uncontrolled, would interfere with the physical order which God has established ; yet farther, from the fact that the moral acts of an individual affect necessarily more or less the welfare of other moral creatures with whom he is systematically connected. The denial of moral providence would be, therefore, to put the order of physical things, and the welfare of other moral beings, at the disposal of any individual moral agent. Where then would be the Creator's right to his own ? Where the paternal government of God over his moral children ? Where his power to punish or reward ? Where the knowledge of distinction between right and wrong ? There would be an end of truth, of certainty, and of hope ; and the universe would be abandoned to a self-destructive anarchy, until it became worse than hell, over which the power of God is dominant, — a chaos of desires and passions and furious actions, where the vile would rage and torment without check, and the good suffer without a possibility of escape. There is no avoiding one or the other of these conclusions ; the divine government must be supreme, or there is no divine government ; every moral being except God must be in all respects his subject, or there is no God ; and any, even the least, limitation of the divine control, is a denial of divine control altogether. God, I speak with deep rever-

ence, must be over all, through all, all in all, or nothing.

If it be asked : How this can be consistent with that moral freedom of the creature which makes him a responsible agent ? we answer, That the free agency of the moral being, the fact of which every one knows by his own consciousness (and there can be no higher proof), must be the freedom of a *creature*, and, therefore, limited by his nature and the circumstances of the economy under which he has his being. His being a creature, supposes his being to have been derived and to be maintained ; so that he must act only within the limits the creative will has set to his agency. A bird is not without freedom as a bird, because he cannot live the life of a fish ; or a fish because he cannot live the life of a bird. An angel is not without freedom as an angel, because he cannot perform the corporeal actions of a man : or a man because his spirit here is incorporated. Neither are without freedom, because the organization of our natures makes us dependent for physical life and comforts on the economy of physical things around us ; because we must have food and shelter and healthful air, or we die. God never intended that we should be independent of him ; though he did intend for us the opportunity of that happiness which springs from personal choice and correspondent action ; and, therefore, with our freedom he ordained the system of things in which we may choose and act for our own good by a conformity with the laws which he has established ; yet is our freedom within law ; and by the operation of the laws of the economy in which he has placed us, and to which he has adapted our natures, he holds us, notwithstanding our freedom, under perfect control.

He never forces us to harm ourselves by doing wrong, but provides methods in using which we may advantage ourselves by doing right; yet we may harm ourselves by doing contrary to the very laws which he has appointed for our good. That which he prevents us from, he reserves within his own action; that only in which he allows us to act is within our freedom, and consequently within our moral responsibility. He may slacken the reins, but never lets them drop from his hands.

Now, we do not say that the methods of his moral providence can be always as distinctly traced as those of his physical rule; natural things are merely passive, and their changes being from his power alone are more obvious; yet it cannot be that his moral administration is less systematic, and could we trace it out as distinctly, we should perceive it to be equally uniform. As it is, the history of individual men and of nations clearly proves that wrong is punished and right rewarded; or, if present inequalities occur, they are yet to be compensated beyond this sphere. This last fact could not, it is true, be discovered by our unassisted reason, but divine revelation relieves us of all doubt. If you ask again, how it is that evil exists and that men do wrong when God could have prevented it? We answer, that it is not for us to accuse or defend the sovereign will of God; he has permitted and does permit evil, therefore, he must have the best reasons for such permission, and in the end his glory will be manifest through all; but it must be acknowledged that there is a wide difference between permitting evil to occur through the unforced action of his moral creatures, and causing it to occur by his own immediate power;

nor can we see how a creature could be free to choose virtue or the right, and not be free to choose sin or the wrong; as in such case, all morality would be lost in a necessity. As it is, no man, let him dispute as he will, can put himself outside of the moral system in which God has placed him; while he is as certainly conscious that, though the issues of his actions are beyond his control, his actions themselves spring from his own choice. Depraved habit may superinduce a force of tendency, which we have not force enough of will to resist; but the tendency is acquired, not original, and has come from the will of God only so far as the depraving nature of sin is part of its inevitable punishment. The common sense of mankind will not allow the force of such habit to avail a transgressor of human laws; nor will it be tolerated in the judgment of God. Philosophy, falsely so called, has sometimes argued for such a necessity in men; and a mawkish sensibility over criminal suicides of their own well-being, has pleaded it in their excuse; but the doctrine in either case is as contrary to the practical reasoning of the world as it is to the declarations of inspired Scripture; for according to both it is subversive of all morality, of human responsibility, and of divine government, reducing men below the brute.

III. The extent of Divine Providence.

It is, says the Catechism, "The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures." This is in accordance with our argument, for if there be any force in our previous reasoning, Providence must be commensurate with creation, and continuous as its continuance. The up-

holding or maintenance of things as they exist is as necessarily an act of divine power, as the calling of them into existence out of nothing ; and, as the entire universe is the creation of one almighty, all-wise will, so it must all be comprehended by the purpose of that divine will, and, therefore, constitute one grand system of active laws ; for the preservation of which economy a constant government by its Divine Author is both morally and physically essential.

Such is the extent assigned to the government of God in innumerable passages of Holy Scripture ; and many corroboratory evidences of the fact are discoverable by an observant reason. Science has demonstrated that the various parts of the universe, within its ken, are held together in harmonious motion by the two grand laws of attraction and repulsion ; that there is nothing so minute as to be beneath them, nothing so vast as to be beyond them ; nay, that there could not be a suspension or violation of either law in any part without producing confusion and destruction throughout all, such is the exactness of the balance with which the apparently opposing forces are harmonized by the divine rule. The doctrine of the New Testament is, that all providence is committed to the hands of Christ, the Mediator, for the accomplishment of his covenant purpose toward the Church ; and, therefore, in their nearer or more remote relations, "all things" work together under his kingly directions, that God "according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself . . . in the dispensation of the fulness of times . . . might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth ; even in him." Hence the doxology of the

four and twenty elders before the throne : "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power ; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created ;" hence also John the revelator heard "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea and all that are in them . . . saying : Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." From this, and many other passages of Scripture, it would appear that a universal providence is necessary to the carrying on, and completion of the plan ordained for the redemption by Christ of the Church, 'which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.'

IV. The particularity of Divine Providence.

Our Church, ever mindful of its design to put the answers of the Catechism into the mouth of each pious believer, specifies some of those things which more immediately affect his experience here : "Herbs and grass (or all vegetation,) rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat (food) and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things, come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand." But for the same reason that some events are particularly ordered by God all must be ; and the whole of our previous argument goes to show the fact and the necessity of such particular action on the part of God in his providence.

The order and arrangement of laws under which all things are placed by the almighty will, because it proves an all-wise design, proves a universal providence ; but, also, as the economy is a combination of parts, each under its own laws consistent with the general laws, it

proves a particular attention of Providence to each part or process, and to the operation of the laws which concern it. In fact, it is upon the divine regulation of each and every part, that the continuance of the whole system depends. As in a vast complication of machinery, if you take away a single wheel, or connection between the wheels, the whole is checked, or made to work wrongly, or even to destroy itself by its own disarranged forces; so it would be with the movements of the providential economy. They mutually depend on each other. If you balance a pair of scales on either side by portions of sand, it is, indeed, the aggregate weight on each scale that maintains the equilibrium, yet, were the beam adjusted with sufficient delicacy, the taking away of a single grain from either would give the preponderance; so it is with the system of worlds, which worlds are made up of atoms. Each atom has its weight, as well as the vastest orb that rolls along its circuit singing of its Maker's power. Again: we see that though there are processes common to different departments of nature animate and inanimate, yet that each individual of the class has its own peculiar place and history. You look over a meadow field; it is all waving in green except where it is sprinkled with wild flowers; but examine more closely and you see that the mass of verdure is not one and single; but that it is made up of separate individual plants, each of which has sprung from its own seed, and has its own life subject to accidents peculiar to itself. So it is with the animal creation. Each conscious being has his own experience, differing from that of all others in some discoverable particulars, while it is with all the others subject to the laws which preside over the family

to which it belongs. So it is with intelligent communities. Take our own nation under its admirable system of government. One grand law of the constitution presides over it as a whole; yet each State of the confederacy has its distinctly recognized individuality, each county in the State, each town in the county, each subdivision of the town, nay, each individual citizen has peculiar rights and a peculiar action. The Executive President at the head of all is one; but he represents the constitutional will of the nation, yet the nation not as a single mass, but every individual citizen who contributes his individuality to make up the aggregate people. So, though with infinitely greater right and power and wisdom, doth the Supreme Lord, the Creator, rule, through the operation of his own divinely appointed laws, the universe he has made, by ruling over each individual creature, event, and process. The tallest angel before his throne, and the least insect that lives its little life and dies in an hour, are equally dependent upon his constant care. The history of mankind under his controlling will, is the aggregate of the history of each individual of the race. We may not be able to trace the connection, but could we see as he sees, it would be all manifest; and as the weaver forms the long, wide web by adding thread to thread in the woof and warp, so does he by his constant, unerring control of each and all, accomplish the result of his infinite design.

Is it objected to this, that it deprives men's actions of their freedom? We answered the cavil in a former part of our argument. He does not force our actions. We are free to act within the limits of the constitution of law he has ordained, — but he does control the con-

sequences of our actions, else would he cease to be God, and each man cease to be his subject. Wise and good laws, so far from endangering freedom, are essentially necessary to its preservation; and all the laws of God are infinitely wise, infinitely good; if we conform to them, we live; if we dash ourselves against them, we perish.

Is it objected again, that such particularity is beneath the infinite God? We answer, that as it was not beneath him to create particular things, it cannot be to take care of particular things; as it was not beneath him to ordain particular laws, it is not beneath him to execute them; it is not beneath him to know each thing, for he is omniscient; it is not beneath him to do or control each thing, for he is omnipotent; it is not beneath him to be everywhere, and, therefore, it is not beneath him to be everywhere the all-wise, almighty Ruler of each and of all things which he has made.

Is it further objected, that, as God has been pleased to create things in a perfect system, a sufficient impulse may have been given to the universe as a whole as well as in its parts, and it is not necessary that he should continue to exercise his power, but might leave the system to evolve itself from the force originally given. We answer, (as once before,) that that would be to make the organized universe a machine, such as men construct to assist their weakness. God sends no such contrivance, and it is far more in accordance with his infinite excellence to believe that his power is everywhere, and continually, directly active. The almighty God has neither difficulty nor weariness in his works.

Is it asked, why, then, are we commanded to pray, since God acts in everything, even the least, according to a plan which he will not alter to suit our wish? We

answer, certainly prayer will not so control the divine plan as to make it vary from his purpose, for then the events would be as contradictory as are the wishes of men; but, at the same time, he carries on his plan by operating through laws he has seen fit to impose; and it is one of those laws, that prayer founded upon the promises he has revealed shall be answered, a law as certain in its operation as any other, though we cannot see as distinctly the connection between the prayer and its fulfilment; and, therefore, prayer must be used to obtain our desires from God as much as any physical law regulating what is called cause and effect. Thus the grand law of his evangelical system, prescribed to Christ himself its mediatorial head, is: "Ask and I will give thee." For observe, that God does not engage to answer all prayer, but prayers offered in faith, or prayer based upon the promises he has revealed, and, therefore, prayer for things agreeably to his will. "This," says the Apostle John, "is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us; it must be according to his directions as to what we should pray for, and our prayer is the method through which his will is accomplished. By prayer we put ourselves in harmony of purpose with himself, and in his answer to our prayer, he performs his own will; still the prayer is the method of our obtaining what we desire, without which the blessing would not occur. Various good reasons might be given, if we had the time, for this ordained connection between prayer and the event sought for; but the principal are, the spiritual benefit it is of to the petitioner, and the stimulus it gives him to personal exertion, according to the divine direction, to secure the

things we pray for ; because the blessing is not vouchsafed to those who only pray, but to those who work as well as pray. It might as well be asked why, since the will of God must be done, we must work, as why should we pray ? The will of God must be done, but it is done by answering our prayer, and blessing our zeal ; or, equally, in withholding from us what we desire because we do not pray and work. The law is not for any necessity on the part of God, since he is supremely independent of second causes ; but it is for our benefit that we may be brought in will and effort to a cordial concurrence with God. In a word, prayer with correspondent action, is a right use of that free agency which God allows us under the laws of his kingdom ; and not the least evidence of his fatherly care for his human children.

SECONDLY: *The Practical Lessons* which the doctrine of divine Providence suggests.

What advantage is it for us to know that God has created, and by his providence doth still uphold all things ?

“ That we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and that in all things which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from his love ; since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move.”

I. To adore God, the Creator and Lord of Providence, as our Father in Christ.

The faith which unites us to Christ, the Son of God, makes us the children of God. Represented by Christ, we are made partakers of all the blessings which he enjoys as the Son of God, and of all the rewards which

he has earned by his mediatorial righteousness. With him the Father is well pleased, and for his sake he is well pleased with us, unworthy and guilty as we are by nature, because washed from our guilt by Christ's blood and covered by his merits. It is, therefore, not with slavish fear, but a reverent, filial boldness that we are to approach God through Christ, rejoicing in his love, and making our refuge under the very shadow of his throne.

All providence has been committed by the Father to the hands of his Son Jesus Christ ; and he administers it for the advantage of the adopted family, whose Elder Brother he is, as a Son over his Father's house. All things belong to God, and the Father hath given them all to the Son, and the Son shares them all with us. It is, therefore, as heirs of God, because joint heirs with Christ, that we are to worship him whose all things are, assured of his faithfulness because of the covenant which God has made with us in Christ our Lord.

This spirit of adoption, springs from no imagination or pretension of our own, but from the Spirit of Christ, the Son of God, sent of the Father through the Intercessor to dwell in us ; and is, therefore, the voice of God in our hearts calling us to him as children to a Father. It is the Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are children of God ; nor will he refuse to answer the filial reliance which he has himself inspired. Such in general, is the affectionate sentiment of adoring homage which we should offer to God.

II. This filial adoration will cultivate in us an entire confidence that all things will work, and are working, for our good, if we love God. Nothing can harm us, for all things are under his control ; everything is for

us, because all things are directed by his hand. The end of providence is "for the praise of the glory of his grace" in Christ Jesus, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. He has ordained that his glory shall be in the full salvation of his Church, and he has so linked our blessedness with his own, that his power and wisdom and truth in all his operations are as certainly for his people as they are for himself.

How patient then should we be in adversity! We call many trials which come upon us here adversity, for such is the common phraseology of the world; but they are only adversity in seeming; they cannot be really so since they are dispensed by our Father's hand. The ways of providence may be to us mysterious, for how can we enter into the wisdom of God? They may seem dilatory; for we cannot see, as God sees, the end with the beginning. The ways of providence may seem hard; but their hardness is only the merciful severity of a wise Father's faithful love, disciplining us to a fitness for a higher bliss.

How thankful should we be in prosperity! When we consider how tenderly mindful he is of our wants, how rich in bounty to our desires, when, as a Father rejoicing among his children, he crowns us with blessing. What wisdom, what power, what riches are exerted for our good! Surrounded by God, upheld by his hand, watched by his eye, cherished by his love, defended by his sovereignty, how precious should be all the proof of his kindness, — kindness purchased for us by the infinite price of Christ's atonement, obtained for us by Christ's intercession, and ordered for us by Christ's authority as head over all things.

How trustful should we be for all time to come! He,

who has been at such cost to redeem us to himself, — who has taken us out of our guilt and misery and rebellion, to make us children, — who has predestined all things for our eternal happiness, — will never desert us, never leave us to our own folly, never suffer any to pluck us out of his hand! His word is passed, and he will keep his covenant as long as his power shall last.

III. But how sad is their condition, who, because they believe not in Christ, have no part in the love of God! If all things work together for the good of those who love God, all things must work against those who love him not. Now they are under his displeasure; but what will be their terrible fate, when God, long-suffering no longer, arms his omnipotence for their defeat, and eternity shall cumulate upon them the fierceness of his wrath! O my people, let us escape while we may, and cling to the cross of him who sitteth upon the throne!

LECTURE XIII.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

ELEVENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

QUEST. XXIX. *Why is the Son of God called JESUS, that is, a Saviour?*

ANS. Because he saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins; and likewise because we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other.

QUEST. XXX. *Do such then believe in Jesus, the only Saviour, who seek salvation and happiness of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?*

ANS. They do not; for, though they boast of him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus, the only deliverer and Saviour; for one of these two things must be true: that either Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or that they, who by a true faith receive this Saviour must find all things in him necessary to salvation.

HAVING exhibited the doctrine of "God the Father," as professed by us in the first article of the creed, we are now to enter upon the doctrine we hold concerning God the Son, as set forth in the next six articles, which it will be our duty to discuss in the order of their occurrence. Following this arrangement, our first inquiry is respecting the meaning of the several names, or rather appellations by which he is revealed to our faith, as our Mediator with God:

Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord.

The first only of these is properly a *name*, designating personal individuality, though significant of the great work which he undertook for our salvation: "Thou shalt," said the annunciating angel to Joseph and Mary the blessed Virgin, speaking of the child she should bear from her conception by the Holy Ghost,

"call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins."

The other appellations are descriptive epithets: "Christ," of his anointment, or divine consecration to his office; "the only begotten Son of God," of his essentially divine nature; and "Lord," of his mediatorial authority over his Church, and over all things for his Church.

Our lesson, to-day, is on the name JESUS.

Jesus! How does the very word overflow with exceeding sweetness, and light, and joy, and love, and life! Filling the air with odors, like precious ointment poured forth, irradiating the mind with a glory of truth in which no fear can live, soothing the wounds of the heart with a balm that turns its sharpest anguish into delicious peace; shedding through the soul a cordial of immortal strength! Jesus! the answer to all our doubts, the spring of all our courage, the earnest of all our hopes, the charm omnipotent against all our foes, the remedy for all our sicknesses, the supply of all our wants, the fulness of all our desires! Jesus, melody to our ears, altogether lovely to our sight, manna to our taste, living water to our thirst! Jesus, our shadow from the heat, our refuge from the storm, our cloud by night, our morning star, our sun of righteousness! Jesus, at the mention of whose name "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess!" Jesus our power, Jesus our righteousness, Jesus our sanctification, Jesus our redemption! Jesus our Elder Brother, Jesus our Jehovah, Jesus our Immanuel! Thy name is the most transporting theme of the Church, as they sing going up from the valley of tears to their home on the mount of God—thy name shall ever be

the richest chord in the harmony of heaven, where the angels and the redeemed unite their exulting, adoring songs around the throne of God and the Lamb. Jesus, thou only canst interpret thy own name, and thou hast done it by thy work on earth, and thy glory at the right hand of the Father; JESUS, SAVIOUR!

In pursuing our meditations on this most delightful subject, and for our edification through a better knowledge of the truth it contains, let us consider:—

FIRST: *The name Jesus.*

SECONDLY: *The reason of it.*

THIRDLY: *The practical inferences.*

FIRST: *The name Jesus.*

I. It is a *name*. Every person has a name which distinguishes, or is intended to distinguish him from every other person, and stands as the sign or verbal representative of his individual self. Thus JESUS was the personal, and, eminently, the peculiar name of the Son of God incarnate, the name to which all his other appellations are added and attributive; not assumed by him after he had reached manhood, but given to him when a babe; not imposed on him accidentally or by the will of man, but appointed for him by God, through a special revelation which an angel communicated, before he was born, to those who were to have the legal charge of his tender years; and so appointed, as we are divinely taught, because in its etymology significant of the gracious design of God which he should accomplish.

II. It becomes us, therefore, as devout and deeply interested students of unerring Scripture, to search out the remarkable significance of this name JESUS.

The revelation by the angel to Joseph, and, because

recorded, to us, was: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." Here the appropriateness of the name is asserted from its radical meaning.

1. The word JESUS, though exactly transferred to our language from the Greek original of the text, where it is written in Greek letters, is not Greek either in form or derivation. Some have erroneously supposed that it is a verbal noun from a Greek verb signifying to *heal* or to *cure*; and, certainly, he, in whom we trust, had been prophetically called, "the Lord that healeth," "who healeth all our diseases," and his blood described as a balm of sovereign efficacy; and we are warranted in honoring as the Great Physician; still the rule of the Greek language will not allow us to admit that such is the etymology of JESUS.

2. It is the Hebrew name Joshua, imitated, as nearly as difference of language would permit, in Greek.

Joshua, from its remarkable meaning and historical associations, was a rather common name among the Jews, who, like other orientals, were fond of such pretentious ostentation; though first given by Moses under divine inspiration to the son of Nun, his pious, heroic successor in command of Israel; and wherever there was occasion to record it in Greek, it is written Jesus, as when Stephen the Martyr, speaking of the tabernacle, says: "which our fathers that came after (Moses) brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers;" and as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of that Canaan as only a type,

says: "If Jesus had given them rest, then would not he (the Psalmist from whom he had been quoting) not afterwards have spoken of another day." It is, therefore, to the original bestowal of the name on the victorious leader of the Tribes that we must turn for its proper etymology. This we find in Numbers xiii. 16: "Moses called Oshea, the son of Nun, Jehoshua," or, as it is afterwards written in our English Vulgate, Joshua. Now, as in Hebrew the consonants only are the radical letters of a word, this was easily turned to Jeshua, which by substituting the Greek termination *s* for the Hebrew *a*, and by throwing out the aspirate *h*, which the Greeks never used except in the beginning of a word, we have: JESUS.

It is at once seen that this change from Oshea to Joshua, was significant of some great prophetic truth. Oshea and Jehoshua are derivatives from the same verb; but Oshea is from the present, probably the imperative, and signifies simply *Save*, or *Saviour*: the prefix of the letter we represent by J, shows Jehoshua to be from the future, and it signifies: *He shall save*. This is not, however, all. The letter prefixed is the initial letter of the peculiar name of God, Jehovah, or Jah; and, according to the constant symbolical habit of revealed language, conveys a certain divine emphasis and dignified sense; so that Jehoshua may be interpreted *The LORD (Jah) shall save*, or more freely: *The LORD shall save through or in or by Oshea*.

Let us compare with this what the LORD says in Exodus xxiii. 20-23: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not

pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off." Now, doubtless, the angel here spoken of is the great Angel of the covenant, or of the presence, who dwelling in the Shekinah, the pillar of cloud and fire, led the tribes to their conquest of the promised land; and by the name of God in him we are to understand the authority or power which the divine name represents. But it is as certain that Joshua was the human, visible instrument through whose personal agency the work of the divine Angel was done. Hence the sacred propriety of changing his name to one which should have the Divine name in it: Oshea into Jehoshua.

Yet further: The Angel of the covenant, we have strong reason to believe, was none other than the Second Person of the ever-adorable Godhead, and the Saviour of the typical Israel; he who in the fulness of time would come, — blessed be his name! has come — to be in human form the Saviour of the true Israel, the church. Hence Joshua was a double type, of the then present, though unseen, Saviour, the Angel of the covenant, and of the Saviour, who, according to covenant and promise, was to bring his people into their heavenly rest. The divine name was in the name of the human Saviour by whom God gave the triumph to Israel of old, as a typical prophecy that Jehovah, the Angel of the everlasting covenant, would be incarnate as the Saviour of his people. This is established by

the testimony of the Evangelist Matthew, following his record of the annunciation to Joseph: "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name EMMANUEL, which being interpreted is, God with us." The prophecy was fulfilled not only in the birth of Christ as the son of a virgin, but also in the import of his name, the interpretation of which corresponds with that which we have given of the word JESUS. Such, we believe, is the majestic import of the most precious name JESUS — JEHOVAH-JESUS; for in him who received it at his circumcision, and now bears it on his throne of highest glory, our Elder Brother, the born of woman, we recognize, adore, and trust the EMMANUEL, God with us.

We are now, in answer to the 29th Question of the Catechism: "Why is the Son of God called JESUS, that is, Saviour?" to declare,

SECONDLY: *The reason on account of which the name of Jesus belongs by divine appointment to the Son of God incarnate.*

This is stated by the Catechism: —

"Because he saveth us and delivereth us from our sins; and, likewise, because we ought not to seek neither can find salvation in any other."

If the first part of the answer be proved, the doctrine of the second follows necessarily; and, therefore, will come appropriately under our third head. For the present, we occupy ourselves with the first clause: "Because he saveth us and delivereth us from all our sins;" the thought in which is taken from the annunciation of the angel to Joseph, Matthew i. 21: "Thou

shalt call his name JESUS ; for he shall save his people from their sins." This brings before us three questions :

I. From what doth JESUS save ? II. How doth he save ? III. Whom doth he save ? Or, the Nature, the Manner, and the Objects of his salvation.

I. The *nature* of the salvation by JESUS. "He shall save his people *from their sins*."

All men are sinners ; the people of Christ are sinners, for he "came into the world to save" — not the righteous, but "sinners." Now, because sin is a violation of the law of God, who denounces the most terrible consequences upon all who shall be guilty of so offending his holy majesty, all sinners are in a state of ruin, or, as the Scripture strongly expresses it, "lost," except they be saved from their sins ; which, the Gospel everywhere asserts, can be accomplished only by the mediatorial work of JESUS CHRIST. Thus, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Again : "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." From these, and many other synonymous passages, we see, that the salvation which sinners need, and which Christ accomplishes for his people, is twofold : From the wrath of God, and from our sins themselves ; or from the penalty of sin, and the power of sin.

1. From the wrath of God, the penalty of sin. Sin is the very opposite of the divine holiness, and a direct

violation of that moral order, which, after the pattern of his own blessed character, he has ordained for the happiness of his human creatures, in conformity with the general laws of his moral universe. It must, therefore, be that sin is ever to God an object of his infinite disgust and hate ; but, as he is the moral Governor of the world, it becomes necessary to his truth, his justice, and even to his sovereignty, that he should punish sin by whomsoever and howsoever committed. The laws which he has established are the rules of his administration as well as of our conduct, and extend in their exceeding breadth over every possible particular of our moral action. His sovereignty is so complete that at no moment we can in thought, word, or deed, put ourselves beyond our responsibility. But the penalty he denounces is equally explicit : "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Every soul that sins, by the very fact of his sin, comes under the divine displeasure not only, but under the penalty of the divine law, and a penalty which is extreme ; for it is death, which from its very nature is perpetual, there being no escape out of death or any return from it. A sentence to imprisonment or any other form of punishment for a term of years, short of the natural life, may be served out and the convict recover his freedom ; even should it be for the whole of his natural life, he may have the sentence reversed after he has suffered some time ; but an infliction of death as a penalty is final, and once that it has been executed, nothing but the power of God in giving a new life can restore from it. The ruin of the sinner is, therefore, utter, perpetual, irremediable, except by the intervention of some divine method which shall justify God who ordained and has inflicted the penalty,

in pardoning the sinner, and in recovering him from under its power by quickening him with a new life.

Farther : The penalty of death, though perpetual like death, is not annihilation or insensibility. The soul, though it dies, ceases not to be, nor loses its consciousness or sensitiveness. It is a moral death. As the favor of God is life, and he, who has that favor is conscious of the divine love, enjoying with keen delight the holy pleasures which flow from that love ; so death is the divine wrath on the soul, and he, who is under its power, is conscious of the terrible doom, suffering with keenest anguish the infamous tortures which pour forth from that wrath. We can measure the ruin of the sinner only by the eternity, the inexorableness, the fierceness of the divine anger against sin. "Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." "Tell me," said one whom faith, not genius, made eloquent, "tell me what the wrath of God is, and I can tell you the sweetness of the name he bears who delivers me from it ; Jesus, my Saviour."

2. From our sins themselves, or their power over us. It is clear that our salvation must be more radical than from the penalty. The penalty is consequent upon the evil in us that is behind it. God is angry with us because of our sins, so that our sins are the procuring cause of our death — they would bring death on our souls, even if there were (what it is impossible to suppose) no judicial infliction of death as a legal penalty. The whole nature of things, the very character of the ever-blessed God must be changed, before a soul can sin and not die. The first act of sin puts us in opposition to the law of life. It is like a taint of leprosy, a fatal, infectious plague which mortifies all our moral

spiritual being, corrupting our powers, depraving our perceptions, and, not only incapacitating us to recover ourselves, but tending surely, constantly, rapidly to greater disease, loathsome decay, deformity, and anguish. Its power over us is not the less, but greater, because a marked symptom of it is an insane love of the mortal cause, a wilful determination to persevere in courting the contagion. Our death is not less certain, because our moral practice is a continued suicide.

Nay, even were it possible that, our moral nature continuing as it is, God should remit the penalty of our past transgressions, the suspension of his wrath would be but for a moment ; because, instantly sinning again, we should incur fresh guilt ; and, again, yet more guilt ; so that the pardon would need to be repeated as often as sin would be committed ; a course utterly irreconcilable with the faintest sense of justice. What mockery would it be, if human laws were so neutralized, if immediately on sentence being passed upon him for one crime, a pardon would set the criminal free to commit new offences, the penalty of each successively remitted as often as he was sentenced ? What authority would there be in such a government ? What security would there be for the subjects it claimed to protect ? What hope even for the reform of the transgressor, thus encouraged by impunity to laugh at the cobweb restraint, and to harden himself by habitual crime ? Can such weak, false lenity be tolerated in the government of God ?

Salvation must, therefore, be radical as the cause of the ruin. The sinfulness of the sinner which is the occasion of the divine wrath, the very cause of hell, nay, in its own workings, itself hell, must be eradicated.

A new virtue of life must be infused, to meet in our corrupted system the fatal *virus*, to counteract its corruption, to overcome and to drive it out by a returning vigor and health, from a divine power. In a word and without a figure, we need to be set free from sin, to be delivered from the power it has over us, to have the bent of our inclinations changed upward toward God and holiness, to receive strength for the conquest of evil habits and the resistance of temptations; nay, in the strong language of Scripture, to be "born again," that we may come out into the world as thoroughly changed in our principles, purposes, desires, and motives, as if we had been created anew with a nature morally the opposite of that which we have had and manifested from our first birth.

Ah! my brethren, now we see the reason of the divine name being in the name of JESUS. Who but God can deliver from the wrath of God? Who but he who created man at first in the image of God, can create us anew and re-stamp the divine likeness on our souls!

II. The *method* of salvation.

How doth JESUS save his people from their sins? Like the nature of salvation, the method of it must be twofold: By his atoning merits, and by his sanctifying grace; the first of which delivers his people from the wrath of God, the penalty of sin; the second, from the power of their sins over them.

1. His *atoning merits*.

The word lost, or ruined, supposes not only present calamity, but a loss of former prosperity, the ruin of a former happiness. Hence, also, we speak of man as *fallen*, and of the act, which occasioned our present misery, as the *fall*. The Scripture teaches us that our

race, as represented by our first parent, was created with a likeness to God and originally enjoyed the divine favor, which the Scripture, as has been stated, denominates life. The condition on which this favor was to be continued could be no other than his conformity to his divine pattern by obedience to the divine commandments; the penalty of his disobedience was, necessarily, death, the entire withdrawal of divine likeness, the infliction of divine wrath, and consequent misery. In order, therefore, to our full restoration, there must be a reconciliation to God. This is what is meant, properly, by atonement. God and sinful man have been divided; it is necessary for our salvation that we be at-one again with God. Atonement is often used to signify the basis of the reconciliation, as the procuring cause of the effect; but radically, it is the reconciliation, the *atonement* itself.

Now to this reconciliation, the full restoration from the misery into which we are fallen because of the divine wrath, it is necessary that the law which we have broken should be so satisfied as to justify our holy, divine Sovereign in removing from our souls the curse of his wrath and taking us again into his approving favor. This justification of his mercy it pleased God, out of the riches of the glory of his grace, to provide in the vicarious merits of Christ, who took our place under the law, that all who believe in him might be admitted to his place in the divine regard; and, hence, we call them his atoning merits. The infinite propriety, wisdom, and mercy of the sinner's salvation through the righteousness of a sufficient substitute, the necessity of both a divine and human nature for the personal constitution of such a substitute, and the

divine appointment of JESUS, the only begotten Son of God, and the miraculously conceived Son of the blessed Virgin Mary, the EMMANUEL, to be that substitute, — were all demonstrated at length in our lectures on the lessons for the Fifth and Sixth Lord's Days. It is now requisite only that we refresh our memories and our hearts with a mention of what Christ, as our atoning substitute, did on behalf of his people. His work was twofold: Expiation of our sins, and obedience to the divine law.

For the law of God, unlike most human laws, not only threatened the transgressor of it with punishment, but also proposed reward for our obedience. We are, therefore, because of our sin, not only exposed to the wrath of God, but without any possible claims to his favor. Even were the penalty remitted, no blessing could be justly bestowed upon us, because we are not entitled to the reward of obedience. Before God can, consistently with his own word, receive us back to his love, not only must the *guilt* of our sins (by which we mean our liability to punishment) be taken from us, but there must also be provided a perfect obedience, the reward of which may be bestowed upon us. Thus JESUS took upon him the guilt of his people's sins, and satisfied the penalty which they had incurred, by his death on the cross; but he also, by his previous active obedience, purchased, or earned, or became entitled to the reward of divine favor, which, according to his covenant with the Father, is transferred to those who accept his substitution for them by believing on his name. This is what theologians technically call *imputation* — the imputation of our sins to Christ, and the imputation of his righteous obedience to us; by which

we are to understand, not that our sins become his sins, for that is impossible as personal acts are not transferable, or that his righteousness becomes our personal obedience, which is alike impossible, but that the legal consequence of our sins, which is death, is inflicted on him, and the legal consequences of his obedience, which is life, is conferred on us. Even as the apostle says: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." JESUS is our Saviour in both ways: his expiatory death, and his active obedience, constituting the ground on which the sinner that believes in him is reconciled to God; and not only relieved from the penalty of death, but also restored to the full enjoyment of divine favor. His death saves us from hell; his obedience entitles us to heaven; but in both the merit is all his, and to him be the glory!

2. His sanctifying grace, by which he delivers us from the power of our sins. We have seen under our former head, what, alas! we know by sad experience, that sin corrupts our whole nature, giving us such an inclination to sin more and more that even pardon itself cannot deliver us from the misery which is its inevitable consequence. The Scripture represents this depravity as a bondage to sin. Such is its power over us that

though its chains are willingly worn, we have not moral strength to break them; and the bondage is aggravated by bringing us under the power of the devil, the great tempter, and of his two principal instruments of temptation, — the world and the flesh. Thus, our sins are denominated our enemies, who oppose our entrance to heavenly rest, as the Canaanites did the entrance of Israel to the promised land; and from them our Joshua must deliver us by a victory which we cannot accomplish of ourselves. So the father of the Baptist speaks of JESUS as “a horn (or strength) of salvation” sent to fulfil the promise which God “swore unto Abraham, that he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.” For, if we be free from the power of our sins, we are safe from all enemies, because none “can harm us if we be followers of that which is good.” This deliverance from sin is called, theologically, *sanctification*, is begun in the conversion of the sinner, and carried on until he is made perfect in glory. It is gradual for wise reasons; and among them, obviously, because the divine process is conducted through the operation of the sinner’s own faculties. The immediate agent in this sanctification to whose power the several steps in the process is attributed by the Scriptures, is the Holy Ghost. He it is that begets us again in regeneration, dwells as a new life in our hearts, enlightens our understanding, turns our affections upward to God, invigorates our faltering will to determine good, and by faith in the gospel transforms us from rebels to children of God. But, as we shall consider at large this sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, when we come to the lesson for the

Twentieth Lord’s Day, we shall now briefly note the sense in which our deliverance from the power of sin is ascribed to JESUS.

a. He obtains for us by the prayers of his intercession, based on the merits of his life and death, the influences of the Holy Ghost. When he had accomplished a righteousness of infinite value, and the Father, well pleased with his work, said: “Ask, and I will give thee,” the Mediator asked that the various graces of the Holy Ghost might be given him for his people. Accordingly, we find that immediately on the Saviour’s beginning his intercession at the right hand of God, the Spirit was sent down on the multitudes of the Pentecost, and has never ceased to dwell with his true church or in the heart of every true believer. So says the prophetic Psalmist: “Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation;” and our Lord at the Last Supper: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.” All the effects of the Holy Ghost, without whose grace we can do nothing, — faith, repentance, love, hope, peace, holy desires, and all good works, — thus come from JESUS, because of his merits. The Holy Ghost is emphatically *His Spirit*; the Spirit of the Son of God, our Saviour. We have nothing of our own; all that is good in us, all the good we ever shall or can have in us, is the result of his work and the answer of his prayers. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;”

"and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

b. The instrument by which the Holy Spirit accomplishes the work of sanctification is the Word of God, which, from its beginning to its end, testifies of Christ. The legitimate effect of the Gospel when applied to the soul of the sinner by the Holy Ghost, is to "work by love," to "purify the heart, and to give victory over the world." The love of JESUS is the great converting, animating, sanctifying argument and motive over all that is evil in our natures, and corrupting in the world around us. It is the divine story of his condescension which brought him to earth, his incarnation as the Babe of Bethlehem that he might be very man; his sorrowful experience of human griefs and human temptations, that he might assure his people of his sympathy; his pure example of human virtue that he might mark the way to heaven; his bitter death on the cross that he might pluck the sting from the last enemy; his resurrection in his crucified body, and his ascension with that human body scarred by the thorns, and nails, and spear, to the right hand of the Father, that as the second Adam he might be head over all things to his Church; and the blessed conviction, which the Holy Ghost bears home on the penitent soul that all this love, and humiliation, and suffering, and righteousness and death, and power and glory, were for every one who believes, which melts the obdurate, encourages the fearful, strengthens the weak, and keeps the unstable. No one can have a heartfelt conviction of a love so great without an answering affection; and the sentiment of every Christian soul must be that of the glowing Apostle when he says: "The love of Christ constraineth us,

because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." The transformation is not immediate, but, for wise reasons, gradual; yet it is certain, because every one "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure;" and because it is written, "He shall save his people from their sins." The sanctifying process which is begun in the regeneration of the penitent will be carried on until it is complete in his celestial life; and the sinner whom JESUS saves, is lifted from the depths of corruption to the height of holiness.

III. The objects of the salvation by JESUS.

Here we need but little argument. The text decides at once who they are whom JESUS saves, and the nature of the salvation confirms the text.

1. "He shall save his *people*."

It is our high privilege to believe that the merits of Christ, substantially considered, are infinite. His human nature, however pure, his human righteousness, however perfect, his human sufferings, however great, must, like all that pertains to the human creature, be finite. Had our JESUS been only man, he could, at best, have saved only himself, because he could not have transcended the obligations which every man is personally under to God. But our JESUS was not, is not, a mere man. Even his humanity was miraculously engendered and sanctified, though real. He was JESUS, the EMMANUEL, God with us; the only begotten Son of God in the Son of the Blessed Virgin. He, existing from all eternity in the form of God, took to his divinity the nature of humanity; and it is from this union

of his infinite divinity with our finite humanity, that the obedience and expiation of the man Christ Jesus derive their value, and, therefore, their value must be infinite.

It is not, however, of their absolute value that we now speak, but of their application. Had the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost been pleased so to apply the saving merits of JESUS, they would be sufficient for the salvation of all men, though the race were millions of times more numerous than it is; but we know that all men are not saved, because those who do not believe are lost. The salvation of JESUS cannot, therefore, be applied to all men. Yet it is equally clear that JESUS cannot have failed in his purpose or any part of it; and, therefore, that his people whom he came to save are not all men, but those among men who are his in some peculiar sense.

It is, also, undoubtedly true that the provisions for the pardon of sin in the merits of Christ are so great, so infinitely great, as to assure every sinner who will believe on his name of acceptance and everlasting life; but it is as true that no sinner will believe except under the constraining influence of the Holy Spirit. If then the salvation of Christ's people depended on the contingency of their unassisted faith, or faith not wrought in them by divine grace, none would be saved, and the purpose of JESUS has failed. The language of the text, however, is not that JESUS will offer salvation to all men, which, blessed be his name! he does; but that he *shall*, positively, certainly "*shall save his people*;" and as the grace of the Holy Spirit by which faith is wrought in the soul, has been purchased by his merit and is given by him, the inference is irresistible that

JESUS not only offers his salvation to all men, but actually and infallibly secures and will accomplish the salvation of his people. Therefore, the Master himself says: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine; . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep." Again: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." This is no discouragement to the seeking soul, for all who come are sure of being received; but it is the highest encouragement for us to be assured that our salvation is in no sense dependent on our own strength, because all who are willing to be his people, he will certainly save.

2. The nature of the salvation confirms this: "He shall save his people *from their sins*." Not only did Christ by his death pay the penalty due to them on account of their sins for all who believe; and by his righteousness purchase for them an eternal happiness of which they are personally utterly undeserving; but it was a principal object of his purpose, and is the main benefit which they receive through him, that his people shall be saved by the grace of his Holy Spirit from their sins themselves, that is, from the power of their sins, their sinfulness of nature, tendency, and habit. Deliverance from punishment is the least part of salvation; for salvation is complete only in sanctification. Sin is the cause of hell, and our sinfulness constitutes our danger of eternal death; until our sins are taken from us, or we are assured that they will be, we are in danger. But this is the work of Christ's spirit through Christ's gospel. Hence, only those are saved who are Christ's people, his "*peculiar people, zealous of good works*;" and all those whom he came

certainly to save, he sanctifies that they may be saved. It is all of grace. "We love him," says the Apostle, "because he first loved us." It is grace to the end, as it is grace from the beginning. He ordained his people, not because he foresaw that they would be holy of themselves; but because he purposed that they should be holy by his power. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . . Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," which is the height of sanctification. It is all of grace, therefore, all of Christ. This is the truth of the Gospel. Our Church teaches no other. They who think that they can save themselves will reject it as a hard saying; but to all who cling to Christ as their only Saviour, it is their only comfort in life and death.

THIRDLY: *The Practical Inferences.*

These flow so easily from our previous exposition, and are so clearly stated in the Questions and Answers for this Lord's Day, that they need only to be set forth, and may then be left to our personal meditations.

I. "We ought not to seek, neither can we find salvation in any other," but JESUS.

1. We ought not to seek salvation in any other.

a. For it is God whom we have offended, God whose wrath we deserve, God who alone can save us. It is not for us to dictate how he shall save us; but since he has revealed the Gospel of JESUS as the only way in which he is willing to save us, and freely offers salvation to all who believe, we should grate-

fully, gladly and at once believe on Christ for our salvation.

b. He has also declared that his highest glory, the glory of his justice and mercy, of his wisdom and his power, is in saving all who come to him through JESUS; and, therefore, should we most reverently and devoutly turn from our sins, by which we so greatly dishonor him, and offer ourselves to him through faith in Christ, that he may have his glory yet more manifest in our salvation.

c. And, when we contemplate all he has done for us in the humiliation, obedience, and death of Christ, with all he is willing to do for us on earth and in heaven by the power and grace of Christ, how should his love constrain us to become the followers of the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for us that he might lead us, through green pastures and beside still waters, to his heavenly fold.

2. But we cannot find salvation in any other.

a. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus. God has said it; and since our salvation can come only from God, there can be no other. What folly for us to think of finding another way than that which the wisdom of God devised; or of trusting another way than that which his power has executed!

b. If there could have been any other way, God would never have put his only begotten Son to such humiliation, or that Son incarnate to such shame and suffering. That no method less would have sufficed, is shown in the sorrow and death of JESUS; that there could be none greater is shown in the divine merit of the vicarious sufferer.

c. So far from there being any other way, God in many Scriptures denounces a fearful aggravation of punishment upon all those who reject Christ. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" O my hearers, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

II. Those do not believe in JESUS "who seek salvation and happiness of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else."

"They may boast of him in words,"—call themselves Christians,— "but in deeds deny him to be the only deliverer and Saviour. For one of these two things must be true: either Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or they who by a true faith receive this Saviour, must find in him all things necessary to salvation."

We can add nothing to this reasoning. Jesus saves his people from their sins. If he cannot do it, none can help him, for his power is infinite. If he undertakes to do it, he will accomplish it. To look elsewhere is to doubt his power to save, or to refuse his grace. There is not a saint in glory who does not ascribe all his salvation to JESUS; and how can they save others who themselves were saved?

If we be not lost, utterly lost, we have no part in

Christ, for he came to save only the lost; and how can a lost sinner help to save himself?

No, blessed JESUS! Thou art the Way, and the Truth, and the Life! No man can go unto the Father but by thee. Save us for thy name's sake, O blessed JESUS!

LECTURE XIV.

THE TITLE, CHRIST.

TWELFTH LORD'S DAY.

THE TITLE, CHRIST.

QUEST. XXXI. *Why is he called Christ, that is, anointed?*

ANS. Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost to be our Chief Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and to be our only High Priest, who, by the one sacrifice of his body, has redeemed us and makes continual intercession with the Father for us; and also to be our eternal King, who governs us by his word and Spirit, and also defends and preserves us in the enjoyment of that salvation he hath purchased for us.

QUEST. XXXII. *But why art thou called a Christian?*

ANS. Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing, that so I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him; and, also, that, with a free and good conscience, I may fight against sin and Satan in this life, and afterwards reign with him eternally over all creatures.

IN our last lesson we were taught the meaning of that most precious word JESUS, the personal name of our divine Redeemer, given him because he is the Joshua of the new covenant, who "saves his people from their sins." But there is another word habitually associated in our faith and praise with the name JESUS; which, if understood, greatly confirms our trust and excites our thankfulness. Dear brethren, you anticipate my utterance, and your hearts, burning within you, know that it is CHRIST.

"I believe," says every true confessor of our holy religion, "in JESUS CHRIST." The name Jesus, being as has been shown sacredly personal, and from its signification, applicable only to him who alone can save, ought never to be used with any other reference, nor

should any epithet be derived from it; though some, under the shadow of a deplorable superstition, have so abused it, especially that infamous band of conspirators against the peace of the world, who cloak a systematic falsehood, opposed to every rule of the gospel, by denominating themselves The Society of Jesus Christ, is not a personal name, however, but a descriptive appellation; and all who, by their union to JESUS as their Head, share in the honorable blessings which it represents, may, whatever was the first occasion of the title, profess and call themselves CHRISTIANS.

We are, therefore, now following the order of the Creed under the guidance of the Catechism, to learn,

FIRST: *Why Jesus is called Christ?*

And

SECONDLY: *Why those who acknowledge Him as their Saviour are called Christians?*

The former inquiry is met by the 31st Question and Answer; the latter by the 32d.

FIRST: *Why is Jesus called Christ?*

I. The word itself is Greek, and an adjective derived from a verb signifying to apply oil; it translates exactly the Hebrew word which we pronounce *Messiah*, and is translated by the Latin *unctus*, participle of *unguo*, from which we make *unguent*, *unction*, and, through the French, *ointment*, *anoint*; so you perceive that both *Messiah* and *Christ* mean, as the Catechism says, *anointed*.

2. Yet, although, radically, anointment signified the application of oil in any way, it came to have, among the Hebrews, a particular and dignified sense; because God had ordained that persons designated to the high functions of prophet, priest, or king, should be conse-

crated or ceremoniously confirmed in their several offices by the pouring of oil on their heads.

a. Thus the word of Jehovah was: "Touch not mine *anointed*; and do my *prophets* no harm;" using the two terms, in poetical parallelism, as synonymous, and expounding each other. It does not appear from express Scripture that prophets generally received such external unction, but, from the fact of Elijah being commanded to anoint Elisha as his successor in the prophetic authority, we may suppose that in more eminent cases the rite was performed. Certainly it is to his office as prophet, that the language of Messiah in Isaiah lxi. 1, refers, where he says: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach glad tidings."

b. As to *priests*, the testimony is explicit. Thus, the Lord, having directed Moses how to compound of olive oil and many precious spices "an holy anointing oil," said, "Thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. (Ex. xxx. 30.) By comparing this with correspondent passages in Ex. xxxix. and Lev. viii., we learn that the anointing oil, mingled with the blood of sacrifice, was sprinkled upon the sacerdotal garments of both Aaron and his sons, their right ear, right thumb, and right great toe being also touched with it; but the fragrant oil, unmingled with the blood, was poured upon the head of Aaron alone. Hence the Psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that (the beard) went down to the skirts of his garments." It has been sup-

posed by some, though perhaps not correctly, that, after this first recognition of an inferior priesthood, they were not publicly anointed; but to the consecration of a high priest the unction was essential.

c. Samuel anointed, by divine command, first Saul, afterwards David, to be king over Israel; Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, anointed Solomon; Elijah anointed Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel. So we may believe the custom was perpetuated, at least until the confusion which ensued on the degeneracy of the circumcised people. In Psalm ii. 6, Jehovah declares: "Yet have I set (literally, anointed) my king upon my holy hill of Zion;" in Isaiah xlv. he calls Cyrus "his anointed," and many other Scriptures show that the term was applied to those gifted by the special revelation or providence of God, with kingly power.

3. The Jews, from the covenant of God with their father Abraham, and some older promises, expected that at a divinely appointed time a great personage would appear, under whose administration their people were to attain the summit of heavenly favor and an unparalleled prosperity. That he would be a mighty king was more than intimated by the declaration of the dying Jacob concerning Judah: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet (*i. e.* from among his descendants), until Shiloh (or The Pacificator) come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people (or the Gentiles) be. That, while a priest and a king, he was to be a prophet, they knew from the inspired testimony of Moses: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shalt

thou hearken." That he was to be a Priest, they naturally inferred from the eminently sacerdotal character of their national constitution, and the unchangeable rule by which all approaches to God and blessings from him were through the mediation of the high priest; which inference was fully justified by David. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek;" and Zechariah: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Behold the man whose name is The Branch, . . . he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (*i. e.* God and Israel). These passages, and at least seventy more, were interpreted by their most able doctors (as seen in Chaldee Paraphrase) as referring to Him who was "the expectation of Israel." Hence, though we find the word retained by our translators only in one chapter of the Old Testament (9th of Daniel), they habitually called this promised personage, who was to unite in himself their three greatest offices, — prophet, priest, and king, — the Messiah, or the anointed. Thus, Andrew, after his first meeting with Jesus, told Simon: "We have found the Messiah, which is," adds the Evangelist, "being interpreted, the Christ." So, also, the woman of Samaria said to Jesus: "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ (again interpolates the Evangelist); when he is come, he will tell us all things;" and Simon, when he answered his Lord's question by the clear acknowledgment, "Thou art the Christ," must, in his native speech, have said, "Thou art the *Messiah*."

II. Our Lord Jesus is called, throughout the New

Testament, Christ, for two reasons: first, because He was the true Messiah of whom Moses in the law and all the prophets did write; secondly: "Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our *Chief Prophet*, . . . our only *High Priest*, . . . and our *Eternal King*."

1. That our Lord Jesus is the true Messiah, need not now to be further demonstrated than it is in the New Testament; for we are not Jews but Christians, and believe the testimony of the evangelists and apostles who have shown us in Jesus of Nazareth all the signs and characteristics which the prophets had foretold of Christ. Whatever discussion on this point may yet be necessary, will be found as we follow the Catechism in the answer to the 31st Question.

2. Our Lord Jesus is Christ, because he is ordained of God the Father and anointed with the Holy Ghost to be our Prophet, and Priest, and King.

A. Ordained of the Father, anointed with the Spirit, Himself the Son of God incarnate. Thus are the three persons of the ever-adorable Godhead united in the provision of a Saviour for us guilty sinners; the Father ordaining, the Son accepting, the Holy Ghost anointing. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Amen.

a. According to the plan of redemption in which the Son, as the representative of servants, takes officially the place of a servant, he could not assume the mediatorship without the appointment, or, as the word in the Catechism is, ordination of the Father, who represents the majesty of the Godhead. As the writer to the Hebrews argues: "No man taketh this honor (the high priesthood) unto himself, but he that is called of

God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek," — Melchisedek, the Priest of the most high God, and also king of Salem or peace, and also, we may add, a Prophet, for he blessed Abram. From this appointment or ordination of God, the Saviour's office derived its validity, and on its validity depended its efficacy. The Emmanuel is mighty to save, not merely because of his righteousness, but because the Father sent him to save, and covenanted to accept him as the surety of his people. His works were not his own exclusively, but the works which his Father had given him to do; and hence when he had accomplished them his *right* to save.

b. His ordination from all eternity was known to the Godhead, but it was necessary that it should be confirmed and assured to us, since we could not rely upon him until we knew his appointment by the Father. Hence, the necessity of his public inauguration with the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which the sacred perfumed oil typified. Accordingly, we find that after he had reached the proper age, and by accepting baptism from his forerunner he had fulfilled all preliminary righteousness, it came to pass, as he went up from the water, praying or asking for the consecration, in the sight of a vast multitude, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost, in a bodily shape like a dove, descended upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." It should not be overlooked that the

dove-like glory did not reascend, but (John i. 33) remained upon him, as the oil on the prophet, priest, and king. This unction of the Holy Ghost was his anointing, and, with the proclamation from heaven, constituted his inauguration to the Messiahship. Here we have a direct fulfilment of that afore-cited prophecy which the ancient Jewish doctors unanimously referred to the Messiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn," etc. (Is. lxi. 1-3.) As the sacred anointing oil was ever accompanied with the promise of divine qualifications, and as its spices diffused around the consecrated one a ravishing perfume, so did the Holy Spirit remaining on him strengthen his human nature, body and soul, for his work, and render all his righteousness a sweet-smelling savor to God, acceptable because the perfect merits of the Saviour, ordained of God the Father.

B. The office of the Saviour was threefold, uniting those of prophet, priest, and king, to each of which he was consecrated by the unction of the Holy Ghost. The Catechism directs us to examine them severally, that we may learn their gracious meaning.

a. He is "our Chief PROPHEET and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption."

The Catechism adds "Teacher" by way of definition, for, though people now understand a prophet to

be one who foretells, such was not the full sense of the term among the ancients, Hebrew or Greek; but they meant by it one who declares the truth of God to men. Our Lord did, indeed, foretell many things, but he was and is the great Teacher of his people, from whom we learn all that God would reveal to us. So he declares of himself, "I am . . . the Truth;" and Peter at the Beautiful Gate says: "Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you;" and when the Catechism asserts that he has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God, by "secret" is meant the "counsel and will" which, but for his teaching, would be unknown.

The learned Jews found it necessary for the understanding of the Scriptures, to believe that God revealed himself and uttered his will by a personal word or voice, and never immediately, or without such intervention, communicated to men; but their doctrine on this point was painfully obscure. John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, makes the fact clear, by showing that the Word which was in the beginning with God, was also himself God, even the only begotten Son of the Father, who, in the person of our Lord Jesus, "became flesh, and dwelt among us." "No man (rather no one) hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;" that is, has made his being and will known to us. Thus our Lord Jesus, who is our Prophet or Teacher, is none else than God the Son, the second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, incarnate as the Son of man. The epistle to the Hebrews sets

forth the same truth: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness," that is, the shining forth, "of his glory, and the express image (or manifest counterpart, as the impression is of a seal), and upholding all things by the word (utterance) of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here our Saviour Jesus Christ is identified with the Son of God, who alone reveals the glory of God and his excellent nature; and the Father now in the Gospel speaks to us by the same Word by whom "the worlds were made." The Son, whose divine office it ever has been to declare the truth of his Father's will, now becomes incarnate, that he may by his Gospel make a nearer and fuller revelation of his grace.

The Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testaments were written by men whom the Holy Ghost inspired for the work; but as, according to the plan of redemption, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ, our Lord Jesus teaches us by the whole Book of God. He is the great Prophet who speaks through all the prophets; he is the great Apostle who speaks through all the apostles; the Prophet of prophets, the Apostle of apostles. And as it is the Holy Ghost, whose illuminating and transforming influences, accompanying the various means of instruction ordained for us of God, make them effectual, and the Holy Ghost is the spirit of Christ; so all the knowledge we gain from the blessing of the Spirit of God without, and the blessing of that divine Spirit within us, is derived from the Lord

Jesus, our Prophet and Teacher. To him alone are we to look, from him alone we are to learn. The eternal Word made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ is "the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

b. He, who is "the Apostle," is also the "High Priest of our profession." Our Lord Jesus is "our only HIGH PRIEST, who, by the one sacrifice of his body, has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us." That our Lord Jesus has been ordained and anointed to be our High Priest, is sufficiently established by the Epistle to the Hebrews, and other Scriptures. "For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

Like the typical high priests, his office is twofold: To make an atonement by sacrifice for those whom he represents; and to make intercession with God for them.

a. a. In our study of several previous sections of the Catechism, and particularly the last, we learned how the Lord Jesus has redeemed his people from the curse of death, due to them for their sins, by taking their place and suffering the penalty of the law in their stead. This vicarious suffering is represented as a sacrifice. The victim was himself, his divinely begotten and sinless humanity, body and soul; the altar was his own indwelling divinity which sanctified the offering, making its merits, of itself finite, infinitely meritorious; and as he was both Sacrifice and Altar, so he is also the Priest; and, as none but the High Priest could make an atoning sacrifice, he is our only High Priest. The typical sacrifices being mere figures, utterly in-

sufficient, needed to be repeated; but our great High Priest, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever," a sacrifice infinitely sufficient, and therefore of eternal efficacy, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; his offering accepted, his work as a Sacrificer was done, and he now waits for his promised reward; "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;" none other is needed, none other can be offered; nor can that one sacrifice be repeated, as the Papists in their deplorable superstition pretend by the Mass, nor need we nor can we have any High Priest but he, as the Papists blasphemously pretend by calling the head of their superstition the Chief Pontiff. The work of atonement is finished, finished for us, finished for all who believe: whereof God has given assurance in raising our Lord Jesus from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. O blessed Lord Jesus Christ, our hope of pardon is alone in thee, and in thy death upon the cross!

b. b. When the typical high priest had offered the sacrifice of atonement without, he entered within the vail, and there, having sprinkled the blood of the victim over the cover of the ark that contained the broken law, he made intercession by fervent prayer for the people. So our true High Priest, after finishing his work of satisfaction, passed into the heavens; and there, not for a little while but constantly, he abides, making intercession for us; not as a suppliant, at the foot of the throne, but as the Son of God seated on the throne itself, and asking of his willing Father the

fulfilment of the covenant, whose condition on his part he had fulfilled: even eternal life for all who believe in his name. Through him, therefore, unworthy as we are in ourselves, we may have access with boldness "unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." All our prayers must go up to the Father through him, and, as he has been accepted for a sacrifice, his advocacy of our cause will be prevalent; and the Father through him will grant us pardon and life eternal. All our services, with our hearts, must be presented through him, and, having washed them from their sinfulness, he, with the perfume of his anointment, will make them acceptable; and he, receiving the reward of his own righteousness, will bestow in return for our poor services blessings far more abundant "than we can ask or think." Unto him be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end, Amen.

c. He is "our eternal King, who governs us by his word and spirit; and who defends and preserves us in (the enjoyment of) that salvation he has purchased."

God, because he is the only Creator, is the only Sovereign of all creatures intelligent or material, and any authority or control over them exerted by any other than himself immediately, must be derived from his ordination or providence. Our blessed Saviour, when he condescended to be our representative, and associated our humanity with his divinity, took a position necessarily inferior to the Sovereign, though, as to his original nature, the Second Person of the Godhead; and accordingly, that he might be fully qualified to accomplish all the divine purposes of his mission, he received

from the Father, representing the Godhead, all authority and power. This kingship or lordship is delegated; and must not be confounded with the infinite right to reign which is his, coequally with the Father and the Holy Ghost, as the Second Person of the ever-blessed Godhead. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," said he to his apostles just before his ascension; and it was granted to him in acknowledgment of his perfect righteousness, passive and active, during his humiliation on earth. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto (*until*) death, even the death of the cross. WHEREFORE, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name (*authority*) which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Here you see that this universal dominion is given to JESUS, the Son of God incarnate, as a servant, — to Jesus *Christ*, or the anointed Jesus, after he had been obedient until death, and because of his obedience, and the result will be "the glory of God the Father." Hence, as this authority was delegated to Jesus as the Mediator, we are accustomed to distinguish it from his original authority as the Son of God by calling it his mediatorial kingdom; by which we mean all the power necessary for the full salvation of those he has redeemed by his righteous-

ness, and for the vindication of the divine honor in the redemption of his people.

This kingdom has two parts, as the Catechism teaches. One, a kingdom over his people; the other, a kingdom over all things for the benefit of his people; "He saves us;" "He defends and preserves us in that salvation he has purchased for us."

a. a. His kingdom over his church.

Thus the announcing angel to the blessed virgin: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." So also, the Psalmist as cited in the Hebrews: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek, which united the kingship over those for whom the priesthood was exercised, — Melchisedek, which is by interpretation king of righteousness, and king of Salem, which signifies king of peace. Our Jesus rules in righteousness and peace over all for whom his atonement and intercession are accepted. The same thing is declared by the apostle: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people (a people who are his own), zealous of good works." Redemption, purification, sanctification, are united in his care of his own people. "Thine they were and thou gavest them me," said he unto his Father in his mediatorial prayer.

The method of his governing his church is twofold: "He governs us," says the Catechism, "by his Word and Spirit."

His people are a willing people. The Saviour rules over them, not by force of mere authority, but with the consent of their hearts and minds. Hence he reveals

his word, the Holy Scriptures, as the law and constitution of his kingdom, the rule by which his people shall serve him, and the source of the motives from which they shall serve him.

But our dispositions are naturally opposed to the divine will. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" consequently, the more that the truth is pressed upon the unrenewed soul, the greater will be its enmity and its opposition. There is, therefore, a necessity of a divine energy to convert the soul to the love of God, and to a choice of the service he requires. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." This is the work of the Holy Ghost, who, because his influences are obtained through the merits and intercession of Christ, is called the Spirit of Christ. He, by his sovereign, mysterious agency on the soul and through the word, converts the heart to love, enlightens the mind to approve, and inclines the will to choose the word of God as the only rule of faith and practice. Nor shall this divine influence ever cease; for not only will it bring the believer gradually to a perfect sanctification in heaven, but there perpetually maintain the glorified saint in a holy happiness. This kingdom of Christ is eternal. "He shall rule over the house of Jacob forever."

b. b. His kingdom over all things for the benefit of his people.

Inasmuch as the church is exposed to great enmity from wicked men and wicked spirits, besides finding many obstacles to its progress and final triumph from the state of things occasioned by sin, there is necessity for the divine defence and preservation of every

believer, and of the whole body, that the salvation purchased be secured. Therefore, all power is given to him and exerted by him for his people. He is "Head over all things to his Church." All power over earth is his. The forces of nature, the discoveries of science, the commercial intercourse of nations, the wars between them, their revolutions and politics, all are controlled and combined in his hand for the furtherance of his cause. All power is his over heaven. As the Lord of hosts, he brings all his angelic armies to serve him in his mediatorship. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? All power is his over hell. For he has conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He does not, indeed, make the malignant spirits who contend against us his willing subjects, neither does he, for wise reasons, wholly prevent their wicked activity; but, as he showed when on earth, even the devils are subject to him. They can do nothing without his permission, and, as will be seen in the end, he will overrule all their machinations for his glory and the prosperity of the Church, and of every member of his church. It is in this that the apostle exults: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This kingdom over all things having been bestowed upon him for the specific purpose of bringing all his people triumphantly to glory, is not eternal; but, when that purpose is accomplished, and when at the final judgment he will have vindicated the justice of God in the condemnation of those who reject the offers of mercy, it will revert to God,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As we learn from the apostle: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father (as the representative of the Godhead); when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all;" that is, providence, which for the church has been entrusted to the Son as the Mediator, will revert to the hands of God, and the Son as Mediator* with the Church, whose head he is eternally, will be subject to God, who, thenceforward, will reign immediately.

Thus is it our privilege, beloved Christians, to see in Christ all that is necessary for his office as our Saviour.

* Some think that by the Son here is intended the human nature of Christ (Thomas Aquinas in *Epistolas*) for which compare Heb. i. 1, Ps. viii. 5, 6, Heb. ii. 5-9. I prefer the interpretation given. The church, ever existing, will exist in its head; the humanity will ever be conjoined to the divinity. Hence the *persona* of Christ is "subject unto him that put all things under him."

What he promises he obtains; what he obtains he secures for all those who put their trust in him. The covenant of our redemption is made, not between us and the Father; but between the Father and Son incarnate as our Mediator with the Father. The hope of the true believer, therefore, cannot fail; for it is established on the truth, the merits and the power of him whom the Father has, by the Holy Spirit, anointed to be our Prophet, our Priest, and our King.

SECONDLY: *Why are those who acknowledge Jesus as their Saviour called Christians?*

We have no mention of the word Christian until we come to Acts xi. 26, where the historian says that about the time when Paul and Barnabas spent a whole year with the Church and taught much people at Antioch, the disciples were there first called Christians. Many contend that this name was given them by divine revelation or apostolic authority; but if that had been the case it would in all probability have been so recorded; and the more reasonable opinion seems to be that, owing to the remarkable success attending the labors of Paul and Silas, the disciples increased to such a considerable sect as to require a particular designation. Christian may have been the name pitched upon by the unbelieving out of derision, and, no doubt, it was used in contempt; but it is certain that it was a very natural appellation, as all people are used to call the followers of an eminent teacher by his name, as Socratics, Calvinists, Wesleyans. The name, however, soon came to be applied and understood generally, as "Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" and it received apostolical sanction, as it is used by Peter in his first epistle, iv. 16.

The Catechism takes occasion from its etymology, and very properly, to describe under it the privileges and distinguishing characteristics of all who are truly called after Christ.

The doctrine of the whole New Testament is, that believers are represented or covered by Christ; that the history of Christ's personal body is a parable of the Church, which is his spiritual body; and that all our blessings having been primarily conferred on our Head reach us through him, as all our services must be rendered unto God through his mediation.

I. Hence our Catechism makes the believer say: "I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing." Belief in Christ is evidence of union to him and of participation with him; for, as the oil upon the head of Aaron ran down to the skirts of his garments, so does the anointing of Christ flow over his whole body, even to the most humble believer. We have seen that the anointing oil represented the Holy Spirit, which, for the assistance of our faith, came down visibly upon the head of Christ after he had passed through baptism to John and abode upon him; so not less truly, though invisibly, is every believer sanctified unto God by the Holy Ghost, which is Christ's Spirit, and reaches his people through his infinitely meritorious mediation. Not only are they regenerated, or born again of the Spirit, but the Holy Ghost dwells in them as an animating, enlightening, strengthening, elevating principle, maintaining their union to Christ, even as the Spirit of the Lord God consecrated, moved, instructed, upheld and maintained his humanity, until his work would be accomplished.

II. But as Christ Jesus was anointed to the several

offices necessary for his work of redemption, so the effects of the Holy Spirit upon each anointed believer must in some proper measure correspond to those offices.

1. Christ is our anointed Prophet, the great Publisher of truth: so "all the Lord's people are prophets," for "the Lord hath put his spirit upon them." (See Numbers xi. 29.) This imitation of Christ in his prophetic office is condensed here into *confession of his name*. Every believer who openly professes to be a Christian, gives his testimony from conviction and experience that the Gospel of Christ is, indeed, the truth of God unto salvation; then he adds to it the confirmation of a godly example, and according to the measure he has of Christ's spirit, will he strive to send the Gospel as Christ sends to all men in all the world. This last prophetic duty of the believer is eminently characteristic of a Christian life, and those who regard the missions of Christianity with indifference, or assist them reluctantly, may well doubt if they have Christ's spirit, for they neither obey his commands, nor follow his example. In a word, the life of a Christian is, by the same Spirit which saves him, consecrated to the spread of the Gospel throughout the world.

2. Christ is our Priest, through whose atonement and mediation all the services of the Church are to be acceptably offered; for, many as were the religious services of both inferior priests and people under the Jewish dispensation, they all derived their value from the expiatory sacrifice and intercessory prayers of the High Priest. So, as Christ by the eternal Spirit offered himself unto God, the believer by the same Spirit offers his whole life. The work of atonement and mediation is

peculiar to Christ, but, through his purifying and prevailing merits, the believer presents himself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to God. His whole life, all his faculties, all his influence, all he has and all he is, are a thank offering for the blessings of salvation. Hence the true Israel are called by the prophet "a nation of priests;" and the Apostle Peter unites with the Apostle Paul in designating the Church as an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices (sacrifices dictated by heart and mind), acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Thus, as priests as well as prophets, our whole strength belongs to God by the consecration of the same spirit which makes us members of Christ.

3. Christ is our King; therefore, as his subjects, his willing people, are we to obey him wholly, making his word our rule of Christian conduct, and following the monitions of his Spirit in all things. But as we are subject to sinful temptations from within, and from the world, and from the devil, who makes use of both our evil nature and the world to seduce and intimidate us, we are animated by the consciousness of our acceptance with God in Christ, resolutely, heartily and courageously to contend against sin and Satan in this life, trusting in the power of Christ to conquer our enemies, and in the grace of his Spirit to conquer ourselves. Nay, we are to regard ourselves, each one of us, as soldiers of that sacramental army, the Church militant, which, by the blessing of God upon his word, is to subdue this revolted, angry world, in spite of its oppositions and persecutions, its wrath, its power, and its ostentations. We follow a conquering King through battle and fatigue and suffering, but if we be faithful unto death, we shall share his certain, inevitable, and glorious triumph. "Unto

him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me upon my throne, even as I have overcome and am sat down with my Father on his throne." Whatever honors preëminent he enjoys eternally, whatever kingdom he shall rule forever, his faithful ones shall share with him immortally; for he who hath made them priests, has by the same word and spirit made them kings unto God and his Christ. His prophetic office shall cease, and theirs with his, for all prophecies shall fail when divine knowledge is perfect; but his priestly office, and theirs in rendering worship and praise, his kingly office, and theirs in the power of the Father, are eternal. He the Melchisedek, king of Salem, king of righteousness, Priest of the most high God; and they a royal priesthood. O Christ our prophet, O Christ our priest, O Christ our King, Lord Jesus Christ our only Saviour, behold us at thy feet, that we may catch the drops descending from thine anointment, and so walk worthy of the holy name of Christian, wherewith we are called! Amen.

LECTURE XV.

THE SONSHIP AND GOVERNMENT OF CHRIST.

THIRTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE SONSHIP AND GOVERNMENT OF
CHRIST.

QUEST. XXXIII. *Why is Christ called the only begotten Son of God, since we are also the children of God?*

ANS. Because Christ alone is the eternal and natural Son of God; but we are children adopted of God, by grace, for his sake.

QUEST. XXXIV. *Wherefore callest thou him our Lord?*

ANS. Because he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil, and thus hath made us his own property.

IN our study of the section for the Eleventh Lord's Day, it was our delightful privilege to meditate on the fragrant name of Jesus, and in that for the Twelfth we learned the meaning of Christ, his title of consecration as our Mediator with God, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. There yet remain two other appellations by which the Catholic Church recognizes him as worthy of our divine homage and entire obedience; the first descriptive of his essential divinity, the other of his supreme authority: "The only begotten Son of God," "our Lord." "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, *his only begotten Son, our Lord.*"

There is, therefore, no need of further preface to our use of the lesson before us, which, as we see at once, teaches us,

FIRST: *The reason why Christ is called, The only begotten Son of God.*

Thirty-third Question and Answer.

SECONDLY: *The reason why we call him our Lord.*

Thirty-fourth Question and Answer.

FIRST: *The reason why Christ is called the only begotten Son of God.*

"Why," asks the Catechism, "is Christ called the only begotten Son of God, since we are also the children of God?" "Because," we are instructed to answer, "Christ alone is the eternal and natural Son of God, but we are children adopted of God by grace for Christ's sake."

I. Sonship to God is, by the Scriptures, ascribed to other persons besides Jesus Christ, viz: *The holy angels*, of whom we read, "All the sons of God shouted for joy;" *men generally*, for the Evangelist Luke, in his genealogy of the Saviour, traces it back to "Adam, which was the Son of God;" we are all of us commanded to pray, saying, "Our Father which art in heaven," and the Apostle Paul strongly approves the declaration of a Greek poet, that men are the offspring of God; *worshippers of God*, when distinguished from those who do not worship him, as the sacred historian tells us that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men;" *the children of Israel*, after they had been solemnly covenanted with God: "Ye are," said Moses to them by divine command, "the children of the Lord your God;" *magistrates*, who are the ministers of God, in a certain sense, before the people, as the Psalmist to the judges: "I have said, Ye are gods (*i. e.* high persons), and all of you are children of the Most High;" and, especially, *believers in Christ*, who, for Christ's sake, and being renewed by the grace of the Holy Ghost, are owned as the "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," having "received the spirit of

adoption." Our Lord is distinguished infinitely above these by the character of his filiation, or sonship. Angels and men are called sons of God, simply because he has given them their being; worshippers of God, because they acknowledge his paternal rule and care; the covenanted Israelites, because he took them under his special guardianship; magistrates, because they represent his authority; and Christians, because he adopts them into his family through their union to Christ: the term in all these cases being used figuratively and implying no essential relationship to God. But our Lord is styled: *the Son of God*; his *own Son*; his *only begotten Son*; which expressions imply that he is the Son of God in an excellent, peculiar, natural, and therefore an eternal relation.

1. *The Son of God.* No one can read the New Testament, the epistles as well as the historical books, without seeing that this title as applied to our Saviour has a very eminent signification, and can by no means be confounded with the figurative sonship of angels or men. Belief in Christ as the Son of God, is comprehensive of all Christian faith. Thus the Evangelist John gives the testimony of John the Forerunner: "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." "He saith unto them: But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that

believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" Now, surely, these expressions cannot mean that Christ was the Son of God in any such sense as Adam was or any Christian is. What need of the Baptist's solemn assurance for this? Did such a conviction require a special revelation? or could a faith that went no farther overcome the world by its inspiring virtue? It is true that the Son of God is a scriptural title of Messiah recognized by the Jews themselves: yet that it was not a mere synonym for Messiah, but meant more, is clear from the fact that the two terms are used together. No one could be the Messiah but the Son of God; and because he was the Son of God he was the Messiah. The Jews condemned him as a blasphemer, not because he claimed to be the Messiah, which, if the claim were false, would not have been blasphemy, but because as the Messiah he avowed himself to be the Son of God. "Jesus answered them and said: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said, also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." So, at his trial before the Sanhedrim, "the high priest said unto him: I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ the Son of the living God? Jesus saith to him, Thou hast said (or, I am, see Mark xiv. 62.) . . . Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses?" For this reason the Jews, after Pilate had acquitted him, insisted on his crucifixion, for said they: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." They were right in their understanding of our Lord's

assertion of his sonship to God, for, if he were not actually the Son of God, he had blasphemed.

2. But that all cavil might be rebuked, the Scripture is if possible more explicit. Thus the Apostle twice in one chapter, (eighth of Romans,) calls our Lord, God's *own Son*: "God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;" and again: "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Here, the force of the reasoning depends wholly upon the peculiar sonship of Christ to God. For no such inference could be made if Christ who had been given were the Son of God only in a figurative or official manner. It is the love of the Father for his own Son which proves his great, his unspeakable love to us, in sending that Son under the likeness of our sinful humanity for our redemption; nor can we, without great violence against the obvious meaning of words, understand by the phrase "his own," otherwise than that Christ is the Son of God in the fullest sense in which one can be the son of his father.

3. Does any objector yet hesitate, and suggest that "his own" may be nothing more than a term of endearment or approbation? There is yet another expression repeatedly employed for the very purpose of declaring that the sonship is natural, by which we mean that he is essentially of the same nature of his Father: "God . . . sent his *only begotten* Son." As, in all cases, the son is of the same nature with his begetter, so is the begotten of God of the same essence as his divine Father. God calls his intelligent creatures, who, as to some qualities, resemble him finitely,

his children, but Christ he calls his only begotten, his only Son in his own nature. It is impossible that the force of language can go farther. This is the reasoning in the first chapter of Hebrews. The writer is establishing the infinite superiority of Christ to all those by whom God had made any previous revelation of his word; and, beginning with the angels, he asserts that Christ hath by inheritance, or by his sonship, obtained a more excellent name or dignity than they. As a son derives his nobility from his descent, so Christ is divine in virtue of his sonship to God. "For," asks he "unto which of the angels said he at any time: 'Thou art my Son, this day, have I begotten thee?'" "this day," meaning after the Hebrew idiom, "in eternity." Again, "unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." God himself interprets the meaning of his own language, and styles his begotten Son, God, as truly God as himself. How could God himself be more explicit in asserting the divinity of Christ? Yet even against this direct testimony from the highest of all witnesses, the sceptic struggles, and would have us believe that the begetting refers to Christ's miraculous conception of the Holy Ghost. It is true that the human nature of Christ was, as it were, begotten by the Holy Ghost, and that he only has been so begotten; but was it to a man, though divinely conceived, that the Father Almighty said: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever?" Nay, is it not clear that Christ was the only begotten Son of God before his incarnation? For the Father sent his only begotten Son into the world. Christ must, therefore, have existed before he was sent; and existed as the only begotten Son of God. Again, in the first chapter of

the Hebrews, it is asserted, that God made the worlds by the Son whom he, a little farther on, declares to be his begotten; and the Evangelist John, in the preface to his Gospel, clearly identifies the Word which was "in the beginning with God," and which "was God," and by whom "all things were made," with him who "was made flesh and dwelt among us;" whose glory his disciples beheld, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." So, also, the Saviour in his prayer before his passion, says: "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Proofs of Christ's preëxistence might be multiplied; but these are enough to show that the title, "only begotten," was his, independently of his incarnation, and antecedently to it. But in what state did he preëxist? Certainly not as man, for he became man by his birth of the Virgin Mary ("blessed was she among women!"): not as an angel, for it is proved that "he had by inheritance a more excellent name than they." What else could the only begotten of God be but God? Not merely divine, but truly, essentially God: as truly and essentially of the same nature as God the Father, as the son of a man is as truly and essentially a man. Not God in some lower sense than the Father, for it is only in his minority that a son is less than his father; and as Deity is infinite, the Son of God must, like God the Father, be infinite; and, therefore, they are equal. Is this reasoning too bold? It is exactly what the Apostle asserts in so many words: "Let this mind be in, you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form (the mode of existence) of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no

reputation, and took on him the form of a servant." How could he be God, and not equal with God; if equal with God, infinite; if infinite, equal with the Father? The begotten is of the same nature as the begetter, the Son of God as God the Father; therefore does the Church adore with equal praises the divine Father, and the divine Son; the First, and Second Persons of the holy Trinity; who, with the third Person, the Holy Ghost, constitute the one God in whom we believe.

We must, however, be careful to remember that the Scripture, in speaking of God and of the relations between the Persons of the Godhead, uses language framed for men, and to express their relations; nor is it possible in such language to make known the infinite truths of God's own being. Hence, the terms Father, Son, begetting, or generation (which is the Latin synonym), are to be understood in a sense as distinct from that which they bear when applied to men, as the divine nature is infinitely above the human, and it may be true that theologians have speculated by inferences from these terms to an unwarranted degree: but we are certain from correlative Scripture that they imply a real, natural, essential, though, from the nature of the case, by us incomprehensible, relation between the first and second Persons of the Godhead; which implies their equal divinity. Hence, also, we must believe that, as the nature of God is unchangeable, the relation between the Father and the Son, though clearly revealed (as to its fact) only in connection with the Gospel, must have existed from all eternity. The Father did not cause the Son to be; the Son did not in his being follow the Father, but, whatever is the

ineffable relation which those words imply, it has been and will be coeternal with the existence of God.

The scope of the lesson for to-day is so great, that we have no opportunity to enter upon other corroboratory arguments for our Lord's divinity, nor even to draw out the many practical deductions from the matter to which we have confined ourselves; but we trust in the Christian judgment of those who have followed us as we reasoned out of the Scriptures, so far as to believe that they will agree with the orthodox of all ages in the truth of Christ's natural and eternal sonship to God: to deny which is to deny his divinity, and to take all value from his atoning mediation.

SECONDLY: *The reason why we call Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, our Lord.*

"Because," says the Catechism, "he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil, and thus hath made us his own property."

The true and essential divinity of Christ being established by his sonship to God the Father, his divine authority over us follows as a necessary consequence; for he hath himself said: "that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." God is our Almighty, all-wise, infinitely holy Creator. Our being, with all its faculties, physical and spiritual, has come from him, from whom have come all things. We, therefore, belong to him, body, soul, and spirit, — all that we are, all that we have, all that we can do; and he has the sole right, as he alone has the competent knowledge, to command and direct

us in the way in which we may fulfil the end of our creation, which is his own glory. It is both wickedness and folly not to acknowledge and obey God as our rightful owner and master. Hence the uncommunicable name of the true God, which distinguished him throughout the Old Testament from all the false gods of the heathen, was JEHOVAH, used in the sense of SUPREME, which our translators render by LORD, printed in capital letters. Thus the Psalmist: "For the LORD (or Jehovah) is great and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the LORD (Jehovah) made the heavens." The term lord, signifying one having right and power to rule, is, however, applied to human sovereigns, dignitaries, and masters, who exercise dominion over their fellow-men. Hence, God the Creator receives homage and glory from the Scriptures, as infinitely supreme over all such forms of authority as may be claimed for, or by him delegated to any of his intelligent creatures; and Christ, as the Son of God, the second person of the adorable Godhead, is by virtue of his original, essential divinity, entitled to our homage and obedience as our Lord, and Lord of all.

But there is a peculiar and evangelical sense in which the only begotten Son of God, incarnate as Christ Jesus, the anointed Saviour, has become our Lord, — the Lord of all Christians, — to which the apostle refers when he says: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord

Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." This is the Lordship of Jesus Christ, of which the Catechism here speaks, and concerning which it is now our duty especially to inquire; although it is included in Christ's office of king, already considered by us when expounding his name, *Christ*.

I. The source of Christ's Lordship.

It is not original but derived. As the only begotten Son of God, he had with the Father and the Holy Ghost the supreme authority as creator, preserver, and administrator of all things; but when, in executing the plan of redemption, he became the representative and took the place of his people, he "was made in the likeness of men," and so "took upon him the form" and condition "of a servant." In so doing, therefore, he, so far as he was incarnate, laid aside his glory: he appeared as man, as a servant; and as a man, and by assumption of human nature, he was voluntarily but truly a servant. Now the stress of all evangelical, as well as antecedent, scripture shows that upon him as the Son of God incarnate, as the representative of men, the Father, representing the Godhead, conferred a delegated lordship, equal in all respects to that which God exercises, within the limits and for the purpose designated by the plan of redemption. Thus says the Psalmist, speaking for God: "I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion;" that is, in the church. Again, the angel in the annunciation: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his

kingdom there shall be no end." Again, in commissioning his disciples, Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Again, in Philippians: "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." These are, as you know, but a few of the passages in which Lordship supreme is conferred upon JESUS the Emmanuel who was born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead, and seated at the right hand of the majesty of God.

II. The object of this Lordship.

It is twofold: 1, His people, or church, comprising all who believe on his name; 2, All things for the sake of his people.

1. His people. The right of God in them and over them is delegated to Jesus Christ. "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." Again, saith he in his mediatorial prayer: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word:" and many other passages of the same import.

2. We have already cited proofs that his power is over all things; and the apostle in Ephesians tells us for what use this illimitable power is given: "That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him

at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." In a word, his kingdom is over his people, and over all things, that he may secure their present and everlasting salvation, which includes a spiritual rule over their hearts and the administration of providence. Hence, his kingdom in this double sense is called his mediatorial kingdom; and the apostle speaks of it, when he says: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;" *i. e.* translated us into Christ's kingdom, that we by his gracious power be delivered from the power of darkness and be brought to a participation of the heavenly inheritance.

III. The right of this Lordship.

As it is not original but conferred, and conferred on Christ incarnate as the representative of servants, he can receive favor or privilege from God only as other creatures, who are servants of God; that is, as a reward of righteousness. The justice of God can allow it on no other principle. Indeed, it is on this moral necessity that the whole scheme of salvation by Christ proceeds — "to declare," as the apostle says, "his (God's) righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The righteousness required, therefore, is such a righteousness as is needed

by those whom Christ represents, which is twofold: expiation of sin, and a meritorious obedience, both of which Christ offered unto God: the expiation in his death, the meritorious obedience in his honoring of the law by his whole life. Because of this perfect righteousness which, through the union of the divine nature with the human in which it was offered, is of infinite merit, the Father bestows the mediatorial kingdom or Lordship on Christ. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto (until) death; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," &c. Again: "Who (Jesus Christ) gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people (*i. e.* a people belonging unto himself), zealous of good works." Again: "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, . . . being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Christ has thus purchased for his own all that believe, and they bear his name stamped, as it were, upon them in token of their being secure in him of everlasting life. "In whom also," says the apostle, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, that we should be to the praise of his glory." Hence, throughout the New Testament, the title Lord is given only and emphatically to Jesus Christ; the Holy Ghost thus showing us, that now all the divine government in all things respecting the church is committed to him alone, as the only mediator between God and man.

Thus you have confirmed out of Scripture the doctrine of the Catechism, as to the reason why all true Christians call Jesus Christ "our Lord": "Because he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil, and thus hath made us his own property."

INFERENCES.

First: The safety of all who believe in Christ.

The Son of God is their king. Incarnate as our elder brother, we know that he has a sympathy for us; appointed and accepted as our Redeemer, we know that he has a right to save us; bringing to his office all the power and authority of his divine nature, we know that he is able to save us. Were he not man, we might doubt his willingness; were he not God, we might doubt his ability; but when we see in him God and man, we may trust him while we adore.

Secondly: The duty of all who believe in Christ.

To serve him as we would serve God, who has given us to him; to avow openly our allegiance to him before the world, and to build up his kingdom as the divinely ordained method of glorifying God in the redemption of the world.

LECTURE XVI.

THE INCARNATION.

FOURTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE INCARNATION.

QUEST. XXXV. *What is the meaning of these words: "He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary?"*

ANS. That God's eternal Son, who is and continueth true and eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man, out of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost: that he might also be the true seed of David, like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted.

QUEST. XXXVI. *What profit dost thou receive by Christ's holy conception and nativity?*

ANS. That he is our Mediator; and with his innocence and perfect holiness covers in the sight of God my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth.

HAVING demonstrated the true and essential divinity of Jesus Christ, from the express declaration of Scripture that he is "the only begotten Son" of God; and, also, his right to be honored by us as our Lord, in consequence of the delegated authority he has received from the Father to be Lord or head of the Church, and Lord or head over all things for the sake of the Church; we now come to inquire how it is that we offer this divine homage and render this entire obedience to one who is presented before our faith in the form and substance of a man like ourselves: which leads us to consider the great mystery of

THE INCARNATION,

or the taking of human nature upon himself by the only begotten Son of God, or, as the Evangelist John

expresses it, his "being made flesh," or, as the apostle Paul states it, his being "sent forth, made of a woman." This incarnation was necessary for the fulfilment of all prophecy, from the first promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent," to the declaration of the last of the Old Testament writers, that "the Lord," the object of all godly faith and desire, as "the messenger of the covenant," would personally "come into his temple." It is necessary to the truth of all the evangelical Scriptures, which set forth Jesus of Nazareth as the Saviour in whom we are to trust, and describe him with the perfections of eternal God. Hence the Church Catholic requires each of her members to say: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his (God's) only begotten Son, our Lord, *who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary*;" — which is a declaration of our faith respecting the constitution of our Lord Jesus Christ's person after such a manner that he was "God manifest in the flesh." Our lesson to-day expounds the meaning of these words, and has two parts: The *first* asserting the fact of the incarnation (35th Question and Answer); the *second* showing the reasons for the incarnation (36th Question and Answer); both of which we shall handle as succinctly as the importance of the subject will allow.

FIRST: *The fact of the Incarnation.*

"God's eternal Son, who is and continueth true and eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man, out of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost: that he might also be the true seed of David like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted."

We derive our knowledge of the incarnation only from the word of God, who alone could reveal it; and we believe the great truth which it contains solely on divine testimony. The Scriptures which recite the glorious mystery, are so familiar to us, and so very many, that we need not quote them at full length; but may take out of them the principal particulars referred to by the Catechism in the place before us: and these we shall arrange under three propositions concerning our Lord Jesus Christ: I. He is truly man. II. He is truly God. III. He is both God and man in one. We say *is*, not *was*; for what our Lord became at his incarnation, he is now on the throne of his glory, and will continue to be forever.

I. He is truly man.

A man is compounded of a substantial body having certain physical qualities and faculties, and of a spiritual soul having will, understanding, and affections. So did our Lord become man.

1. As to his body. It was *substantial* — not a mere phantom or appearance of a body, but having all the qualities which distinguish substance from spirit. "Handle me and see," said he to his disciples after his resurrection; "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me (or perceive me to) have."

It was a *human* body. Flesh is a term used generally for the substantial part of man. "The word became *flesh*," says the Evangelist; "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same." His glorified body has undergone that change which the apostle describes, when, in the xv. of 1 Corinthians, he speaks of the body which the believer will have after the resurrection; but

his body, while he was on earth, was as truly human as ours are, and, if we be his people, ours will be glorified as his is now. "He," says the apostle in Philippians, "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" which could not be, if his body had not been first like ours. There was purity in our Saviour's body from the holy manner of its origin and his constitutional sinlessness, but, whether on earth or in heaven, it had and has all necessary human characteristics.

He was "born of a woman;" "the seed of the woman," according to the first promise; "made of a woman," as the apostle has it; "conceived in her," as the angel told Joseph; carried in her womb until "the days were accomplished that she should be delivered." The generative cause of the conception was miraculous from a divine energy: "conceived by the Holy Ghost," says the Creed, or, more properly rendered, *from* the Holy Ghost; "by the operation of the Holy Ghost" our Catechism explains it. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that holy thing (creature) which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God," is the declaration of the angel. The blessed Mary was a virgin; but all that a woman is to a child of which she is the mother, she was to our Lord's humanity;—not to his divine nature, for the Papists talk blasphemously when they call her the mother of God. The work of the Holy Ghost was threefold: in sanctifying the body of the Virgin for the purpose of our Lord's becoming flesh through her; in causing the conception, and in sanctifying the child: hence, the purity and sinlessness of our Lord's human-

ity, for he was not conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, as we are; hence, also, his freedom from the moral connection which all others born of woman have with the first Adam's apostasy. But in all other respects, Christ derived his body as we have derived ours.

The papists have many idle and preposterous fables about the incarnation; and a little while ago a council of their bishops met to determine that the Virgin Mary herself was conceived without sin, which would seem also to require that her mother was as immaculately born, and so backward to the first mother: but the scriptural doctrine is, that the sanctification of Mary for her maternal office was at the time of her conception from the Holy Ghost. We reject with horror all the profane inventions of a miserable idolatry, but we should receive with adoring faith all that the divine word teaches of the manner in which Jesus Christ is truly human; and how nobly does the sacred narrative exalt the character of maternity above the disgraces of the fall! How absurd are the honors which the papists, imitating Gnostic follies, would throw around a celibate state! If God chose a virgin to exalt her, the exaltation he conferred was making her a mother! It could be the privilege of but one woman to bear our Elder Brother; yet blessed are all those women whose maternal faith consecrates their offspring to be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, immortal heirs of his heavenly kingdom!

2. Our Lord derived his human *soul* in the same manner (mysterious beyond all guess at explanation) that every man derives his soul with his body. All further question is idle, for it would be prying into

what God has not revealed. But it were grave heresy to suppose that our Lord had not a human soul as truly as he had a human body; for without either he would not have been man. He needed to be made like unto his brethren in all things, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God."

3. The history of our Lord after his birth confirms the truth of his full humanity. He was nourished as a babe at the breast. He increased in stature, from the weakness that needed the swaddling bands, and the support of his mother's arms. He went up as a Jewish lad when twelve years old to keep the Passover at Jerusalem, and afterwards passed through youth to the adult stature of man. He saw, he heard, he felt, he spake, he walked. He hungered, and eat; he was thirsty, and drank. He was weary, and he rested. When night came, he slept; and (oh, blessed proof of human sympathy!) he wept. He suffered extreme agony, sweating "great drops of blood," and, wrung with mortal anguish upon the cross to which his blessed hands were nailed and his feet bound, his meek brow bleeding under the thorns, his dear side pierced to his heart by the cursed spear, he died, breathing out his soul, was laid in a tomb, and the spices were prepared for his embalmment.

He thought as a man. He was taught and grew "in wisdom" and "in favor with God and man." He performed the moral duties of a man; witness, his obedience to his mother and to Joseph her husband, to the Jewish authorities, to Cæsar, and to God. He loved as a son, and as a friend, and as a patriot. He was full of human sympathies; pitying the poor, the diseased, and the sorrowful. He took little children up in

his arms; he was grateful for friendly kindness, and at the grave of his friend he groaned in spirit, being troubled. He prayed "with strong crying and tears." He devoted himself with most intelligent and hearty zeal to do the will of his Father. He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Yes! he was *pure*. The seed of the woman, conceived of the Holy Ghost, he fell not in Adam. Born of a woman, yet begotten of God, he was our fellow-man but not our fellow-sinner. Sanctified by the Holy Ghost from the womb, "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," but he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." His holy soul ruled the infirmities of his body, and he was "as a lamb without blemish, and without spot."

Thus was he truly man: "the son of man," "the seed of David;" "the man Christ Jesus;" "the man approved of God;" "that man whom he hath ordained," "the second Adam." The perfect humanity of Jesus Christ is an essential article of the Christian creed; for our Lord himself hath said: "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood" (*i. e.* receive the doctrines of my incarnation and atonement), "ye have no life in you."

II. He is truly God.

This we have already sufficiently proved in our exposition of several sections, but especially the last, when we showed that the Son whom God the Father sent into the world to be made of a woman, is the only begotten Son of God; by which phrase we can understand nothing else than that he is truly and essentially of the

same nature as his Father. The same "Word" which was God in the beginning, "became flesh and dwelt among us," says the Evangelist; "and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." If, therefore, he was God before his incarnation, he must continue to be God after his incarnation; that is, God is essentially eternal, and the only begotten Son of God must be God from everlasting to everlasting. Thus the Evangelist applies to the incarnation the very distinct prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." So St. Paul also: "Who, being in the form of God, . . . took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men." So the apostle again: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh." So also the Catechism: "God's eternal Son, who is and continueth true and eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man." We may then pass on to our remaining proposition:—

III. He is God and man in one person.

God the Son *dwelt* in the man Christ Jesus. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; or, more literally, tabernacled among us. He took the humanity, so miraculously prepared, for a tent, a habitation, a covering under which he humbled himself, radiating his divine glory through it as the mediator between God and man. The writer to the Hebrews calls it the vail of his divinity: "The rent vail, that is to say, his flesh." "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He entered the flesh within the Virgin Mary, for the "holy thing which was born of

her is called the Son of God." Nor was this dwelling only in his body, but in the man Christ Jesus, soul and body; in the mind, the affections, and the will of the holy man, using the spiritual as well as the physical faculties of the humanity: for the human obedience, active and passive, which he came in the flesh to render acceptable, because infinitely meritorious, was of the soul as well as of the body.

But it was more than a mere indwelling, such as that of the Holy Ghost in every believer. "The Word was made flesh." The passive verb is there used to indicate the concurrent action of the Father, who sent his only begotten, and of the Holy Ghost, who overshadowed the Virgin with the third person of the ever-blessed Trinity (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!), and of the Son, who, of his own personal will and by his own personal act, came into the world as the seed of the woman. "He took upon him the form of a servant." "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," *i. e.* participated in our human nature. Here, in the word *took*, we have the nearest approach we can have to an explanation of the manner after which the divine and human natures of our Lord were united. He took the human nature to his own divine nature. The human nature—body and soul—in all its parts, qualities, faculties, and functions, physical and spiritual, became his, his own; not in essence but in relation, by assumption and adjunction. Hence, the pains of the man, his sorrows, his very death, became, as the language of many scriptures asserts, the pains, the sorrows and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly man as he is truly God. His

divinity was not transformed into humanity; he is still God. The humanity was not transformed into divinity: he is still man. The divinity was not commixed with the humanity, nor the humanity with the divinity, else he would be neither God nor man. He is both God and man. The divinity was not made less, for infiniteness is essential to it; the humanity is not made more, for finiteness is essential to it. He is entitled to all the divine attributes while he disowns nothing that is human except sin. He is the only begotten Son of God, yet our brother. The human nature is adjoined to the divine. He is our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, God manifest in the flesh; Emmanuel, God with us. God, yet man; man, yet God: the God distinct from the man; the man distinct from the God: else God would have been a sufferer, or the works of the man been finite in merit. Yet, we repeat, the humanity is so united to the divinity that he is one Lord Jesus Christ. This perfect union is described by theologians, for want of a better term, as in one *person*; that is, one individual. The divinity so pervades, sanctifies, and renders meritorious the nature, obedience, and sufferings of the man, that the Father accepts them and we rely upon them as the one infinitely worthy atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Objections have been made by those who deny our Lord's personal divinity, to this use of the word *person*, and, did we use it in its ordinary sense, the objection would be plausible; but the singular, anomalous nature of the case warrants us in using a term, when we have no other, according to our definition of it: which is that oneness that constitutes the two natures of Christ, as one agent or representative for us with the Father.

Other questions which may be here suggested have been treated, or will be elsewhere, in our expositions of the Catechism; and we wish to add only that it is important for our understanding of the true catholic doctrine to remember the precise conditions which have been specified. Thus Hooker, whom theologians worthily call the judicious, says that "in four words we may fully, by way of abridgment, comprise whatsoever antiquity hath at large handled" respecting the person of our Lord, "either in declaration of Christian belief, or in refutation of heresies, viz: truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly. Truly, as to his being God; perfectly, as to his being man; indivisibly, as to his being of both one; distinctly, as to his continuing both in that one." Indeed, it should be noted that the first four and greatest councils of the church were called to define and establish the catholic doctrine on these several points: the Council of Nice, to condemn the Arians, who denied the proper divinity of Christ; the (first) Council of Constantinople, to condemn the Apolinarians, who attacked the proper humanity of Christ; the Council of Ephesus, to condemn the Nestorians, whose leader, Nestorius, was wrongfully charged with asserting that there were two persons in Christ; and the Council of Chalcedon, to condemn the Eutychians, who confounded the two natures of Christ. All these heresies are full of mischiefs, and, therefore, our pastors should imitate the ancient church in guarding the people against them.

SECONDLY: *The reasons for the Incarnation.*

QUEST. 36. *What profit dost thou receive by Christ's holy conception and nativity?*

ANS. That he is our Mediator, and with his inno-

cence and perfect holiness covers in the sight of God my sins, in which I was conceived and brought forth.

These heads of doctrine have been already treated of in our lecture on the lesson for the Sixth Lord's Day, but a brief review of them may not be unprofitable.

The incarnation was necessary,

I. To establish an intercourse between God and man.

The sinner convinced of his guilt would not dare to approach God, whom he had offended, and whose wrath he knows himself to have incurred. Whence we find those of God's servants to whom he had manifested himself, trembling with fear, and becoming as dead men. It is the difficulty which Job felt when he exclaimed: "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me; for he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take away his rod from me, and let not his fear terrify me: then would I speak and not fear him; but it is not so with me." The proposition of a reconciliation must, therefore, come from God to man. On the other hand, God in his holiness cannot approach the sinner and not destroy him. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity," says Habakkuk. There must, therefore, be an intervention of some pure medium between holy God and sinful man; one equal with God, yet equal with man, who may put his hand upon both; and that Mediator is found in the constitution of Christ as Emmanuel, God-man. In him we behold God united to humanity, but a humanity sinless;

humanity united to God, but to God in loving-kindness and tender mercy. God looks well pleased on man represented by his incarnate only begotten; man looks with penitent confidence on God represented to him by his elder brother. As God, the blessed Christ enters into the wisdom of God and is his Counsellor; as man, he assures the believer of his kindred and is his Redeemer. Christ for us hath by his atoning merit taken away the rod of his Father's wrath; and now, having passed into the heavens for us, his flesh once torn on the cross becomes a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, by which we have access with boldness unto God, even on his throne. Christ is the reality of that ladder which Jacob saw, whose top rested on heaven while it was set on earth, by which our prayers ascend to God, and the blessings of God descend to us.

II. To make a sufficient ground of our reconciliation with God.

Whatever be the merciful purpose of God towards the sinner, he must be just; and God, not laying aside his justice, yet bent upon mercy, provides a method by which his violated law is magnified, yet his grace vindicated from reproach; and that method is the substitution of the Emmanuel to expiate our guilt and provide a righteousness on the credit of which we may be rewarded. "He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It was necessary that this substitute should be divine, for every creature is himself subject to God, and requires all his powers to discharge his own duty. It was necessary that he should be in the form of a servant, for God himself cannot be under his own law.

It was necessary that he should be a man, because man was the sinner to be redeemed; that he should magnify the law given to man, because that was the law which had been dishonored; that the law should be magnified on earth, because it was given to rule man in this life. It was necessary that the penalty of the law should be endured in the nature of man, and in the sphere of his rebellion, because here the curse had passed upon human nature. But it was necessary that an infinite merit should be communicated to the obedience and sufferings of the substitute in human nature; and so the divinity in the humanity pervaded the actions of Christ, honoring the law infinitely more than the obedience or eternal punishment of a whole world.

III. To sustain man in his weakness.

With the wrath of God have come on man a thousand woes. The natural, as well as the penal, consequence of sin, is death, with all its precursive evils and all its following torment. Bitter is the cup which time presses on every human life. Without some strong sustaining power man would sink under his calamities. The child of God, even while he looks forward to heaven, is not relieved from his pains and sorrows. Still the body of sin and death is around his spirit. Still he lives in a fallen, faded, polluted, and hostile world. Still he must meet the malice of the Satanic tempter and the contradiction of sinners. Grace has, indeed, made a blessed change. Afflictions are to him no longer evidence of divine wrath, but proofs of a father's care to chasten him for heaven. Yet he must be assured of this blessing and be upheld, for his flesh is weak, though his spirit be willing. And this is given in the person and sorrows of Christ, who was tried

with all our temptations, whose heart bled in all our griefs, who shuddered under the deep shadows of his Father's wrath, and poured out his soul amidst the anguish of a cruel death. He himself learned obedience by the things that he suffered; and now on the throne of his glory, he knows how to succor them that are tempted; and, while he assures the believer of his human sympathy, he assures him also of the same divine strength that sustained him under the griefs and difficulties that we are passing through. With what strong consolation is the Christian met as he flies for refuge to the hope set before him, and sees the great sufferer on the right hand of God; the crown of universal glory on the brow yet scarred with thorns, and the hand pierced by the nail holding forth to him the sceptre, that he may touch it and live forever. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, he lays aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets him, and runs with patience the race set before him. Nothing short of this can sustain and cheer and make us victorious. Oh, the life of my life will go out unless I can see my nature in him sustained by the divine strength I need; unless I can see the same hand that wipes away my tears wiping away his own; unless I can trace his footsteps down into the dark valley and know, however painful my path may be, that he has trodden it before me, and now waits to welcome me to his joy when I have drunk the cup which he drank for me.

IV. To elevate our fallen nature.

"We are all *by nature* the children of wrath." Cavil at it, modify it as men will, there is no getting over the

fact that in Adam our nature was cast down from its pristine dignity to shame and dust. "By man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." By man must that nature be raised from the dust, and its dignity restored. The second Adam must repair the ruins of the first, and, in the Son of Man, the Lord from heaven, we see all that we have lost more than restored and secured to us by a covenant never to be broken because its surety cannot fail; nay, which has already fulfilled all its conditions. By man we lost the image of God, his presence and communion. In Christ we behold God again dwelling in man, and offering to us fellowship with the Father and with himself. By man we lost the empire God gave him over all things here; in Christ we behold man head over all things to his church. In man, we fell under the tyranny of death and him that hath the power of death; in Christ, we behold the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, and, having conquered death and hell in the enemy's own dominions, dragging them bound to his chariot-wheels, and making ostentation of his spoils, openly triumphing. O Death, where is thy sting, when thou comest as a radiant angel to call us home; when every cord of flesh thou dost rend is but the parting of another stay that binds the aspiring soul to earth; when thy severest agonies are but the wrenching of fetters from our wings! O Grave, where is thy victory, when, through the tomb which Jesus has broken for us, we pass to the holy, glorious heavens! There, the second Adam has entered the second paradise; and there, when the resurrection shall change our vile body to be like his glorious body, shall our entire humanity be pure, sinless, innocent, and blessed forevermore;

but oh, with what greater bliss when we walk amidst the garden of delights, not alone, as Adam walked at first, or as afterwards with but one to second his praise; but in fellowship with an innumerable company of saints and angels plucking freely of the tree of life, and drinking of the river of God's pleasures that flows from out the throne of God and the Lamb! And the bliss shall be eternal: for sin can never enter there, because the second Adam is the Son of God who cannot die; because he has died on the cross and now liveth forevermore.

Great is our confidence, because we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.

LECTURE XVII.

CHRIST'S SUFFERING AND CROSS.

FIFTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

CHRIST'S SUFFERING AND CROSS.

QUEST. XXXVII. *What dost thou understand by the words: HE SUFFERED?*

ANS. That he all the time that he lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind; that so, by his passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favor of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

QUEST. XXXVIII. *Why did he suffer under Pontius Pilate as his judge?*

ANS. That he, being innocent and yet condemned by a temporal judge, might thereby free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed.

QUEST. XXXIX. *Is there anything more in his being crucified than if he had died some other death?*

ANS. Yes, there is; for thereby I am assured that he took on him the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God.

THE doctrine held by the reformed churches, according to the word of God, respecting the propitiatory and vicarious nature of our Lord's sufferings, has necessarily been handled at large in our comments on several previous lessons, especially on those for the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Lord's days; and, therefore, it is not requisite, that, in studying the article of the creed before us, we should do more than consider such particulars in it as have not been already treated of.

"I believe . . . in Jesus Christ our Lord, . . . who . . . suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

The death and burial of our Lord are reserved for
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the next lesson; and we are now to learn: What is meant by his *suffering*; Why it is stated that he suffered *under Pontius Pilate*; and the reason for his suffering *on the cross*.

FIRST: What do we understand by the words: *He suffered*?

The Catechism tells us in the Thirty-seventh Answer, which has just been read in our hearing.

Here are several things to be noted: the purpose of his sufferings; the cause of his sufferings; and the duration of his sufferings.

I. The *purpose* of our Lord's suffering.

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." That is the history of our ruin. The sentence which fell upon our first parent has fallen upon us all, for like him we all have sinned. That sentence is death: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Death is the mode and execution of divine wrath against the sinner; but it means more than the separation of soul from body, which we ordinarily call death. It is such an infliction of divine punishment as turns the life of man, which God originally meant for happiness in the enjoyment of divine favor, to utter misery; and, as man sins in bodily acts consequent upon the will of his spiritual nature, and as the sentence is upon the whole man, both his soul and his body are under the curse. The misery of man is not at once extreme, because, instantly with his ruin, began the working of the remedial scheme by which the full execution of the sentence was delayed, that the sinner might have opportunity of repentance through faith in the redemption. Our first parents did not die,

that is, their mortal life did not end, the moment that the sentence was incurred; but they at once began to die: their life was thenceforward a fatal disease until it terminated in the mortal agony, and then, had not the curse been averted by the redemption, they would have gone into everlasting, utter misery. So with us. We are born to die. Death meets us at the beginning of life, and we are dying all through our days on earth till we go to our graves; and then, if not saved by Christ, we must go to endure the never-ceasing agonies of eternal death.

But the purpose of God in Christ is to redeem us from death through the consecration of Christ to die in our stead, that so the penalty, being transferred to him, might no longer rest upon us who accept the grace. As the apostle says: "The righteousness of God [is manifested] which is by faith unto all and upon all them that believe, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." On no other ground but the substitution of Christ to endure the penalty for us could the mercy of God to us be justified, and only through his suffering can we escape eternal death. So, also, on no other ground can be justified the suffering of the innocent Jesus when he was abandoned by God the Father, whose word is pledged for the reward of righteousness, to the malice of wicked men, the ignominy of crucifixion, and the curse of the violated law.

II. The *cause* of our Lord's sufferings.

The substitution of Christ for sinners exposed him to the wrath of God against sinners, and, as that divine wrath is manifested in the sufferings which are the punishment of sin, so, as the Catechism teaches us, the cause of Christ's sufferings could be nothing else than the wrath of God laying upon him the punishment which we deserve. There can be no suffering but that which proceeds from the wrath of God against sin. Yet the wrath of God was not against our Lord personally, because he was without sin; but against the sinners whom he represented. It was as if, when the bolts of divine vengeance were launched against sinners, our Lord put himself before them, sheltering them with his own person and receiving them on his own body and soul. He himself was, and continued to be, throughout the whole of his sufferings, the beloved of the Father; and it was because he was the beloved of the Father that his sufferings had their great merit of propitiation. Thus the prophet: "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; but he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; . . . he had done no violence, neither was any deceit to be found in his mouth; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." . . . "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied; by his knowledge (*i. e.* knowledge of him or faith in him) shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made interces-

sion for the transgressors." Or as the apostle expresses it: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And again: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:'" which is equivalent to saying that, by his crucifixion, he bore the curse which we deserved, in our stead.

It follows, also, that the sufferings of Christ were of his whole human nature, or "both of his body and soul," as the Catechism has it. The sentence upon man because of his sin, is upon both his body and soul. Nay, as the body, not being itself of a moral nature, cannot sin except as it is the instrument of the soul, the suffering of the body has no other end or reason but the affliction of the soul; and, as we see in human suffering on earth, but as will be fearfully more apparent in the place of torment, the soul is and must be the great sufferer, not only from its sympathy with the body, but in the anguish of its own spiritual remorse and bitter grief. It is possible, as many a martyrdom or natural death-bed has shown, for a Christian to forget the keenest anguish of body in the joyful elevation of his spirit; but there is no escape from the internal anguish of the soul itself. So, during the interval between death and the resurrection, while the bodies of the wicked are senseless dust, their spirits are in torment; — though their torments will be fearfully aggravated when, their bodies being raised, their spirits are tormented through corporeal sufferings. Hence, as is manifest from many passages, our Lord suffered not only in the pains of his flesh, but far more in the ago-

nies of his spirit. "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "Now," said he, "is my soul troubled;" and again: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The Saviour was sinless; but all the distress that sin could bring upon the soul of one, who, not conscious of personal guilt, stood in the room of the guilty, he felt; the sense of horror from the contact of sins laid upon him, the anguish consequent upon the withdrawal of his Father's countenance, the humiliating weight of the curse, the shrinking which the living feel from an ignominious, cruel death,—all were his. These were the causes of that fearful, indescribable agony in the garden; these filled to the brim that cup which he shuddered over before he could drink it, when, as yet, not a hand had been laid upon him, and the physical torture of the cross was in anticipation; and these wrung out of his meek heart that exceedingly bitter cry, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

But our Lord stood not in the room of a single sinner; he bare the sins of many; and heaven, opened to us by the vision of John, shows a mighty host redeemed unto God by his blood. Hence his sufferings were incalculably more than the sufferings of any one mere man could have been. For, though we, unhesitatingly, and not without horror, reject the idea that his sufferings were weighed out to him in exact proportion to the sufferings which every individual of all he redeemed would otherwise have actually suffered, we must see that they needed to be so great as to justify God in taking away his wrath from all the Saviour's people. It was, among other reasons, for the purpose of strengthening our Lord's humanity to endure this

accumulated aggregation of suffering, that it was constituted in union with the divine nature, which also gave to his sufferings their infinite value. So the Catechism says, that "he sustained the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind."

This last sentence requires some little explanation lest its meaning should be misunderstood; and we shall give it conformably to the comments of the learned and pious Ursinus, the author of the Catechism, and, therefore, the best expositor of its sense. The idea of the sentence is that of several scriptures: as where our Lord declares that "God so loved the world" as to give his only begotten Son; and the writer to the Hebrews, that Christ "tasted death for every man;" and Paul, that "he gave himself a ransom for all;" and John, "that he is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Yet Scripture must be read in harmony with itself; and, as we know that all men are not actually saved, but only those who, through grace, being ordained to eternal life, do believe and repent; it cannot be that our Lord bore the wrath of God against the sins of the whole world in the same sense or degree that he bore it in the room of his people. They were actually redeemed by his blood, he having taken the penalty they deserved on himself, so that their salvation was certainly secured by his vicarious satisfaction; but the rest of mankind, though they have, so far as the gospel is preached to them, opportunities of salvation, are condemned to death eternal, without violence being done to the covenant of the Son with the Father, in the plan of salvation.

Thus Christ died for all mankind, because in him

the blessings of salvation are not confined as were those of the Abrahamic dispensation, to one particular people. The Gospel is sent throughout all the world to be preached to every creature; and whosoever will, be he a Jew or Gentile, may take of the water of life freely. And again: The merit of our Lord's sufferings, through the union of his human to his divine nature, is infinite; displaying the wrath of God against the sins of the whole world, and so justifying the offer of divine mercy to every sinner that believes on his name. As several of the later fathers, following Tertullian, phrase it: "His merits are sufficient for all; but efficient for the elect;" and Aquinas, whom the Papists call "the Angelical Doctor," teaches: "The merit of Christ as concerns its sufficiency equally belongeth to all men; but as to its efficacy, . . . the effects and fruits of it are mercifully bestowed on some, and, by the just judgment of God, withheld from others." Nor can this be otherwise, since it were preposterous to make Christ the substitute of those that refuse his representation. But it is, on the other hand, positively true that the benefits of Christ's merit do actually, though not in a saving degree, extend to all men: because, for the sake of Christ, all temporal mercies come to all, and the world is kept by his intercession from becoming a hell of extreme torture and despair; and very precious blessings, though not the most precious, are bestowed on mankind through the restraining influence of Christianity and the light which it sheds on every mind wherever the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine. It is enough for us to know that, if we believe in Christ with our whole heart, his merit will certainly save us; but, if we refuse the grace he offers,

not all the mercy of God in Christ warrants the slightest hope of escape from everlasting death.

III. The duration of our Lord's sufferings.

On this particular we need not greatly enlarge; for, as we have already shown that the penalty of death which was inflicted on men was not merely the mortal agony of the dissolution of soul and body, but all the evil consequent upon our mortality, which is, in the language of our Church, "a continual death," or, as we expressed it, a long mortal disease of which what we ordinarily call death is the critical symptom, it was necessary that the imputed death should come upon our Lord at the very moment of his life's beginning. All his life on earth, he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. His spirit was under the shadows which preceded the utter darkness of the cross, and, learning obedience through the things which he suffered, he became our sympathizing Saviour, and knows how to succor us who are tempted, that we may overcome the world, and, notwithstanding our manifold tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God. All his precursive suffering would not have been enough (as we shall hereafter learn) without the consummation of his death on the cross; but, had he not suffered from his manger to his giving up his spirit on the cross, he would not have suffered the death we deserve to die, nor have secured for us the grace by which alone we may "live unto God" while "we die daily."

SECONDLY: *Why is it stated that he suffered under Pontius Pilate?*

The main reason, doubtless, for the insertion of this man's name here, was that the date of our Lord's suffering on the cross might be precisely fixed. The sev-

eral gospels repeatedly speak of Pontius Pilate as the Roman officer, or procurator, charged by the emperor with the government of Judea at the time of which they write. Luke, the evangelist, had before said that Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea when the Baptist began to preach. Now we know from other histories that Pilate was removed from his procuratorship just before the death of Tiberius, and after he had exercised his government ten years. This fixes the period of his administration between A. D. 25 and 35, which corresponds with all reasonable accuracy to the sacred chronology,* and proves that our Lord was crucified in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. Justin Martyr, in his Apology (or defence) for Christianity, about the beginning of the second century, boldly appeals to the record of the acts of Pontius Pilate, then, like the reports of all governors, on file at Rome, for the truth of the facts respecting the passion of our Lord. There is also a remarkable passage found in some editions of the Jewish History by Josephus, which speaks of an extraordinary person, well known by the name of Christ, who taught new and extraordinary doctrines, and wrought miracles, and persuaded many people to follow his opinions, who were called after him Christians; but, being brought before Pilate by impeachment of the principal Jews, he was crucified. Yet his followers did not desist, but claimed through their preachers to have seen him alive three days after his death. The passage has, however, been thought by many, though not all, learned men to have been a forged interpolation of the text of Josephus, and, therefore, we need not insist upon citing it as cor-

* See Lardner, Cred. Gos. His., vol. i. b. ii. c. 2.

roboratory proof. My own opinion is that the passage is genuine; but modesty may well prevent me from urging it when Lardner is against it. But there is a passage in the Annals of Tacitus which cannot be impeached, and states that "Nero persecuted with exquisite torments a sect of men commonly called Christians, — called so from Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius was executed under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea." There are other highly convincing testimonies of writers not Christian; but these may suffice to show the reason for this sentence in the Creed.

It is proper, however, from deference to the teaching of the Catechism, and for our greater edification, that we note here several important truths connected with our Lord's suffering under Pontius Pilate.

1. It coincides with prophecy. For, —

a. Shiloh could not come until the sceptre had departed from Judah; which was not the case until after the death of Herod the Great, and the appointment of a Roman governor over Judea as a conquered province. Hence the Jews, by appealing to Pilate, acknowledged their lack of authority.

b. The Jews, and the Romans, now the masters of the world, may be said to have comprehended all mankind; and our Lord was "to be despised and rejected of men:" not of the Jews only, but of men generally. So the Psalmist: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed;" and the company of believers after the Pentecost interpret "the people" as the people of Israel (Acts iv. 27), and, following the

same view, we may suppose that by "the rulers" are meant the rulers of the Jews, who united with the Roman authorities in the execution of Christ, or the Lord's anointed; as Jesus himself had told his disciples: "The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death; and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him."

c. It was necessary also that he should "be taken from prison and from judgment." So was he imprisoned and put to death under the double sentence of the Jewish Sanhedrim and the Roman governor.

d. It was distinctly foretold that the Messiah should bear the curse by hanging on a tree; but, as we shall presently see, crucifixion was a mode of punishment never used by the Jews, who, if they had executed the Saviour, would have stoned him to death, — the punishment of blasphemy by their law.

2. There was a most fitting significance, as the Catechism says, in his being, "though innocent, condemned by a temporal judge that he might free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed." We see him, the just, crucified as the unjust. His innocence is acknowledged. Pilate's wife from her miraculous dream, the penitent thief by his side, the centurion who glorified God after his death, and all the people that stood beholding and smote their breasts, but especially Pilate himself, in explicit and repeated declarations, testified his innocence: yet was he nevertheless condemned and crucified under the will of God, acting through the hands of ostensible authority. So may we, as we look upon the sufferer, see him taking our place, bearing our condemnation, and dying, not

himself guilty, the death which we deserved. Nor should we overlook the strong consolation that, though the world may unjustly reproach, condemn, and persecute his people for his sake, all its malice is of little account, so that we are able, through faith in his guiltless sufferings, to have the pardon and favor of God his Father. God may chasten the Christian even by the hands of his enemies, but will not forsake him or suffer him to be overwhelmed. Nay, though he slay us we may yet trust in him.

THIRDLY: *The reason for our Lord's suffering on the cross.*

"Thereby," says the Catechism, "I am assured that he took on him the curse which lay upon me, for the death of the cross was accursed of God."

This is in agreement with the apostle (Galatians iii. 13): "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Let us, however, for greater explicitness, consider first the nature of crucifixion, and then the reasons why our Lord was put to death in that manner.

1. The nature of crucifixion.

It was probably a most ancient mode of punishment: for nothing was more natural than that men, determined to execute a criminal or an enemy, should, if they refused him the mercy of the sword, hang him on the nearest tree; and this especially when they meant to make him a spectacle of ignominy, vengeance, or warning. Examples of this are frequent among all people. When, however, they desired to protract the agonies of the victim, they would fasten him upon the tree to perish with pain and hunger. The tree would

afford an opportunity for this by its forked or transverse branches : hence, one of the Latin terms for such an instrument of torture was *furca*, or fork, like the letter Y ; and another, *patibulum*, (from *patere*, *quasi* to stretch apart,) which would seem to intend the cross-piece to the perpendicular, forming the letter T. In process of time the cross came to be artificially constructed of two beams in this last form, or, sometimes, though at a much later period, like the letter X. The Jews, as we learn from several passages, used to hang persons convicted of certain crimes on a tree, as criminals among us are hung by the neck on a gallows ; but their law did not allow them to protract their sufferings, nor to leave the bodies hanging after sunset. Among the Greeks, and, especially, the Romans, crucifixion was common, but was ever considered the most disgraceful and extreme mode of punishment, — being awarded only to slaves and the worst malefactors, though sometimes to their barbarian captives, whom they considered as slaves.

When a person was condemned to the cross, the command of the magistrate to the executioner was : "Go ; bind his hands, scourge him, cover his head, hang him on the unhappy tree." Scourging in every case preceded the crucifixion. It would seem, also, that the convict was made to bear his cross to the place of punishment. When there, in some cases the cross was first laid along on the ground, and the man so bound to it that it might be lifted with him and fixed uprightly ; or the cross was first erected, and he, being seated on a bar projecting at a proper height,* was then fastened upon it : which was done by driving strong spikes

* *Sedilis excessu*. Tertull. adv. nationes, l.II.

through the palms of the hands, the arms being stretched out on the transverse beam, and by a spike driven through both feet, or one through each foot. Some have doubted whether or not our Lord's feet were nailed to the cross ; but the prophecy is explicit : "They pierced my hands and my feet." (Ps. xxii. 16.) The limbs were, however, most probably, bound with cords, as else the weight of the body would have torn it off at the nails. No vital part being touched, the wretched sufferer would hang often for days,* until he expired from the mingled agonies of shame, hunger, thirst, and pain. The anguish of crucifixion (from which we derive our term, *excruciating*) must have been, physiologists tell us, very great. Cicero, in his impeachment of Verres, who had crucified a Roman citizen, calls it "the most cruel and terrible" of all punishments, which "no man should see, or hear, or even think of." The great nails were driven through the parts of the hands and feet abounding in nerves and tendons ; the arms being stretched back and apart made the slightest motion aggravate the pain ; the action of the air on the open wounds, increased it, by inflammation, yet more ; and, besides, the blood was necessarily forced in unnatural quantity on the brain and the stomach, which itself would cause intolerable torment. To this physical torture must be added, what to a pure, noble spirit would be far more poignant, a consciousness of disgrace, and an exposure to the jeers and taunts of an idle, brutal mob, always gathered around an execution. Plato, in a passage which has ever excited great astonishment from its striking resemblance to prophecy, makes crucifixion to be the

* Often till the third, sometimes even the seventh day.

utmost possible extreme of dishonor and suffering to which a man can be brought by the malignant persecution of men. He is describing a just person, such as philosophical imagination portrayed, maintaining his integrity against every possible disadvantage, and says: "This man, though he has done nothing but good, shall be accused of all manner of wrong, and, though innocent, pass through life under censure as the most wicked of men, yet maintain through all a most unshaken virtue, until he shall be seized, scourged, tortured, bound, have his eyes put out, and finally, after having endured the extreme of all other cruelties, shall be crucified."*

Our Lord's head was not covered, neither were his eyes put out, and the mercy of the Jewish law, (strangely remembered by that bigot people in their savage fury,) which commanded that "strong drink should be given to him that is ready to perish," doubtless, prompted (perhaps at the suggestion of some pitying bystander, though the soldiers may have done it insultingly,) the offering of a sponge, but with sour wine and bitter infusions, to his painful lips; for there was no such custom among either Greeks or Romans. But, in all other respects, he suffered crucifixion as it has now been described: he was bound, was scourged, was tormented by the soldiers; they laid the heavy wood on his blessed shoulders, and then nailed him on the cross.

In the addition of the crown of thorns, as of the purple robe, the reed placed between his bound hands, and the superscription on the cross-piece (*patibulum*), where the Romans usually put the crime of the sufferer,

* Plato, Report, II. § 5.

we see the mockery of his claim to be King of the Jews,—the only thing in our Lord's conduct which the callous-hearted Pilate appears to have cared about, it being rebellion against the Roman authority. We are now prepared to learn

II. The reason why our Lord was put to death on the cross.

1. It was death on a tree. The sin fatal to our race was committed by an offence against a tree which God had commanded should not be touched. It was also a tree, which, in the arrangements of Paradise resembling the apocalyptic description of heaven, bore the fruit of which if a man ate he should live forever. There is an exquisite fitness in our Lord's atoning for sin on a tree, thus turning the occasion of a deserved death into the ever-verdant, fruit-laden source of life eternal. As we look back to that disastrous scene where the tempter triumphed in the sin of the first Adam that brought the curse on us all, we see the second Adam, by his infinite righteousness, triumphing for us over all the force of our enemy, achieving our immortal blessing.

2. It being requisite that our Lord should die under Jewish as well as Gentile law, there was yet no mode of mortal punishment in the Mosaic law by which his suffering would have been consistent with prophecy; for, of the four methods known to them, slaying by the sword would not have answered, because it involved no disgrace; nor stoning, because then his bones would have been broken, which the Holy Ghost had foretold should not be; nor burning, because then the flesh of the great Paschal Lamb would not have remained to be the food of his people, for strangulation would have

rendered his flesh unclean. It was, however, necessary that his blood should be shed, because, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission; that he should be lifted up to the eyes of faith as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness; that he should suffer extreme agony, because his pains were to be expressive of divine wrath against sin; and, above all, that he should die on a tree, because that was the only mode of death which God had specially pronounced accursed. These requisites could be found only in crucifixion.

3. It, more than any other imaginable method, is calculated to impress us with the religious lessons which the death of the Lamb of God for us should teach every believer on his name.

a. With what horror should we regard those sins which brought such shame, and anguish, and curse on him, our devoted Friend and patient Surety!

b. With what confidence may we rely upon the acceptance of his atonement for his people when it pleased the Father so to bruise him, and put him to grief!

c. With what readiness should we give up the world when duty requires it, as we see it rejecting, persecuting, and maligning our divine Master, Example, and Saviour! There, as we behold him crucified, should we see "the world crucified unto us," and so "crucify ourselves unto the world."

d. With what patience and long-suffering should we bear the certain, inevitable trials of a Christian life, so fully and painfully set forth in the crucifixion of our elder brother, while we arm ourselves with his patience, and assure ourselves of his sympathizing grace! The cross is the badge of our profession; we all must

bear it; but it is the sign of our victory, because Christ in the midst of its agonies, overcame for us.

e. With what instant earnestness should we flee to take shelter in the Saviour's atonement, while, on the one hand, we see that God will by no means clear the guilty, and the fearfulness of the punishment which is sure to follow unrepented sin; on the other, see how greatly Christ desired the salvation of our souls when he opened for us the entrance to life by devoting himself to the cross, with all its shame, and curse, and anguish!

O Lord Jesus, fain would we bear the cross for thee, as thou didst bear it for us! But we are weak and sinful; how shall we bear what thou didst faint under? O Saviour, stamp its image on our hearts! Crucify us to thyself! Then shall the sorrow be easy, and the burden be light!

LECTURE XVIII.

CHRIST'S DEATH AND BURIAL.

SIXTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

CHRIST'S DEATH AND BURIAL.

QUEST. XL. *Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself, even unto death?*

ANS. Because, with respect to the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could not be made otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.

QUEST. XLI. *Why was he also buried?*

ANS. Thereby to prove that he was really dead.

QUEST. XLII. *Since, then, Christ died for us, why must we also die?*

ANS. Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins; but only an abolishing of sin and a passage to eternal life.

QUEST. XLIII. *What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice of Christ on the cross?*

ANS. That, by virtue thereof, our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with him, that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us; but that we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

QUEST. XLIV. *Why is there added: He descended into hell?*

ANS. That, in my greatest temptations, I may be assured and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell.

OUR lesson for the last Lord's Day led us to consider carefully, and, as we trust, not without profit, the sufferings of our Lord, especially his condemnation under Pontius Pilate, and his bitter anguish on the cross. To-day we are called to behold the great Sufferer *dead*, and not only dead, but *buried*.

The doctrine of his death could not be separated from an understanding of his *crucifixion*, which was the

mode of it, and, indeed, has been fundamental to all that we have hitherto been taught respecting the way of salvation; therefore, the Catechism simply reiterates the main truth under the 40th Question. With like brevity, the purpose of his *burial* is stated to be proof that his death was really accomplished (41st); and an inquiry as to the reason why we must die, notwithstanding his dying for us, is met by showing what the death of the Christian has become, through the propitiation of Christ (42d). Then follows a recital of some further benefits, or, rather, of some not as particularly dwelt upon before, derived from the cross (3d); after which is set forth the fulness of comfort to be found in the fact asserted of our Lord by the Creed, that *he descended into hell*.

There are so many interesting questions connected with the last point, that it requires a separate discourse; and we shall postpone its formal treatment, using it, however, as far as needed in our present study. The other matter of the lesson may be conveniently arranged under three heads:—

FIRST: *The necessity for our Lord's humiliation even unto death.*

SECONDLY: *His burial, and the reasons for it.*

THIRDLY: *The benefits which we receive from his death and burial.*

FIRST: *The necessity for our Lord's humiliation even unto death.*

The infinite merit of our Lord's vicarious sufferings having been already shown, the question now is: Why was it requisite that he should actually die? Were not those sorrows of his that wrung his heart all his life long, his terrible agony in the garden, his anguish of

both body and soul on the cross, enough to testify the divine wrath against us without this extreme humiliation? If Enoch and Elijah were taken into heaven without having passed through the mortal agony, why might not the Father have assumed his well-beloved Son to his glory from the cross, in the sight of his enemies, as he did afterward from Bethany, from the midst of his adoring disciples? Would not the arrest of his passion by such majesty have vindicated the excellence of his atonement more than even his resurrection after the disgraces of the tomb? My brethren, if such thoughts arise in our minds, it is because we forget the penalty which the Mediator undertook to pay on behalf of his people. The sentence was explicit: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." The life of the sinner was forfeited; and, therefore, the life of the substitute was required. He had covenanted to die that they might live. We must believe that nothing less, nothing short of this, could have answered the broken, dishonored law. All the sacrifices in which the victims were slain outright, all the prophecies which declared that he should pour out his soul unto death, all his own testimonies respecting the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, all the subsequent teachings of his apostles, show that his obedience was not complete until death, nor his expiation but in death. All his antecedent sorrows and pains and tortures were but precursors of his death: death was in them all, but not complete until, as in our death, his spirit was separated from his body, leaving the clay lifeless, and prone to mingle with the dust out of which it was taken. It was no seeming death, no deep trance

nor syncope simulating death, from which he recovered on the third day; but an entire dissolution, so that he ceased to live until at his resurrection he began to live again. "Father," said he, in the midst of the great darkness, as the vail of the temple was rent in twain, "into thy hands I commend my spirit! and, having said thus, he gave up the ghost," or, as it is in the Greek, he expired: the breath went utterly out of his torn, exhausted frame; his body yet hung on the cruel nails, but his anguish was over; his blessed heart was still, his holy head drooped, his gentle eyes were closed; he had lived our life to its last pang; his soul had gone up to his Father; and Jesus of Nazareth was dead.

The death-sentence passed upon man included far more than the mere mortality of the body: death was a name for the wrath of God upon body and soul; wrath eternal, because never could man have suffered sufficiently to expiate his sin, and, without the renewing grace of God, he would be continually incurring fresh condemnation by fresh offence: so that death implies all the torments of hell, as well as the penal effects of sin in this world; but the death which is the end of our course here, was a component, essential part of the death-punishment, besides being a most striking emblem and foreshadowing of the wrath which follows it. Our blessed Lord did suffer the wrath of God in his spirit, as well as his body: the very wrath which makes the hell of the wicked. "The sorrows of death compassed" him; "the pains of hell gat hold upon" him; or, as the Catechism says (44th), he was in inexpressible anguish, pains, and hellish agonies, during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross: as far as a pure, sinless spirit can suffer hell, he suffered it; but, so com-

pletely did he expiate our guilt, so fully satisfy divine justice, so utterly exhaust death by his sufferings, that he needed not to pass, after the article of dissolution, into the torments which await the wicked beyond this life. As he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, he said: "It is finished!" because, in that last submission, he bore the last pang of the curse, he drank the last drop in the cup of wrath, he felt the last stroke of the avenger, and the Father, in receiving his soul, accepted his atonement. Then was it apparent to the universe of observing intelligence that he died for us, as at his resurrection it was apparent that his death was infinitely sufficient for our eternal life. Hence we, after the example of Scripture, testify our belief in the redemption, by our confession of Christ's death, and, obeying his own command, celebrate his death by a sacrament which symbolizes the breaking of his body and the shedding of his blood.

O beloved Christians, what strength and sweetness there is in this article of our faith! If Christ walked never so closely with us during all our previous temptations and sorrows, but turned away when the last enemy approached, shaking his fearful dart, how should we shrink back in terror, and cry, in his own "exceeding bitter cry," "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But now that we have seen him dead, we know that he will not leave nor forsake us, but will be our guide even unto death; we mark the prints of his bleeding feet down every step into the valley dark as darkness itself, and know that he will go with us through the mystery. Then we fear no evil, because his rod and his staff shall comfort us.

SECONDLY: *His burial, and the reasons for it.*

41st. *Why was he also buried?*

Ans. Thereby to prove that he was really dead.

1. This is a very important reason; for, on the reality of his death depends the perfection of his sacrifice, and the fact of his resurrection; and, consequently, the truth of all Christianity. It was at the third hour (nine o'clock in the morning) that our Lord was fixed on the cross, and about the ninth hour (three o'clock in the afternoon) that he expired. Many lived on the cross for days before they died; and it would seem that both the malefactors executed with him were alive toward the close of the day, for the soldiers brake their legs to kill them outright; but in six hours his sufferings were over, his spiritual agonies hastening the catastrophe. The next day was a Sabbath, a high solemnity, — one of the three Sabbaths of holy convocation, and immediately previous to the wave-offering (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11); so that the Jews, whose law forbade them to let any one remain on a tree over any sunset, were specially anxious that this notable Sabbath should not be defiled, and besought Pilate that an immediate end should be put to the sufferers. Strange bigotry, that could tolerate such malignant injustice as the crucifixion of an innocent one like Jesus, yet stickle at a form! Yet such is formality in religion: its scrupulosity in outward rules survives the spirit of piety. Pilate, easy to comply when it cost him nothing, commands the soldiers, not without witnesses from among the Jews, to fulfil their wish: but Jesus is so manifestly dead, that neither soldiers nor Jews doubt it; yet, to make all sure for us as well as for them, one of the Romans thrusts a spear into his side. The spear reaches his heart, or, at the least, gives a mortal wound; for out of

the fissure flows not only "blood," but what the evangelist calls "water," or the serous fluid found within the sac encasing the heart (*pericardium*); though it is possible that it was from the effusion which great agony often sends into the *pleura*: but, in either case, the proof is clear that death had actually occurred. If there had been the slightest chance for denial, the Jews, after the resurrection of our Lord, would not have spared it; but, though they bribed the soldiers to say that his disciples had stolen his body in the night, they did not pretend to say he had not been really dead.

Had not divine Providence prevented it, the sacred body would have been roughly buried in the place appointed for executed malefactors, near the scene of the crucifixion; but, now that he had "poured out his soul unto death," he is spared from farther indignities. Joseph of Arimathea, of whom we know little more than that he was "a rich man," a Pharisee, "an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God," "a good man and a just," who "had not consented" to the decree against Christ, but was "his disciple, though secretly, for fear of the Jews," — remorseful at having forsaken his Master, and impressed by the awful miracles attending his death, now goes "boldly" to Pilate and asks "that he might take away the body of Jesus;" and Pilate, willing to please a man of his rank, and all the while persuaded that our Lord had suffered unjustly, gives him leave. Joseph had a new tomb prepared for himself, hewn, as was the custom of the rich Jews, out of a rock in the midst of a garden; and there he determined to lay the precious remains. But Nicodemus, his brother counsellor, and like him in concealed discipleship (for it was the same that came to Jesus by

night), now claims a part in the sad offices. The Jews, who abhorred burning, and the disembowelling necessary for the embalmment common among Eastern people, or any other mode of treating the bodies of their dead than burial, — yet craved the solace of fragrant obsequies, and were accustomed to wrap them with fine linen in spices, which were sometimes burned in great quantities. So, as Joseph had the honor of giving the tomb, Nicodemus brings the perfumes, not less than a hundred-pound weight of myrrh and aloes, — a costly, even magnificent provision, — such as would have been made for a person of highest rank; and together, the true-hearted Marys standing by if not assisting them, they wind the body in linen cloths with the spices, hoping to do it farther honor when the Sabbath had passed by. So they laid him in the rocky tomb, causing its door to be closed by a great stone rolled into its mouth; and there in a garden the second Adam rested in death, as in a garden death had come upon the first. But the wretched, persecuting Sanhedrim, though they could not oppose Pilate in his grant of Joseph's request, are not satisfied; and the next day demand of the Procurator that the sepulchre should be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples might come and steal the body, and so claim that Christ's own prophecy of rising on the third day was fulfilled. Pilate, out of patience with their wicked pertinacity, tells them to use their own watch-guard, which was a body of sixty soldiers assigned to guard the temple, and make as sure as they can. They, therefore, seal the stone, so that any movement of it might be detected, and set sentinels to prevent any entrance. It is not necessary to believe as some do (Theophylact and oth-

ers) that the whole of the temple guard were put to the service; but the Jews had it in their power to employ all that was sufficient, and doubtless did. How did God, through their own act and intention to frustrate the truth of Jesus, thus provide for their discomfiture and our assurance!

The death of the Saviour is even yet more certain. How could he, even if his wounds were not mortal, have survived the enrolment of his head and person so closely? — or his confinement within the rock-bound cell whose entrance was so entirely sealed? Or how could his terror-stricken friends, against all these precautions, have abstracted the mangled body, and restored him to the full, vigorous life in which he appeared on the day of his resurrection?

2. Neither, without his burial, would all the prophecies respecting his work for us have been fulfilled. Until then, though he had had his place with the wicked, he had rest with the rich in his death;* neither was there opportunity for the Father to ransom his chosen from the power of the grave, and over the grave give him the victory. These prophecies are, however, so connected with what has been already said, and will be said hereafter, that we may refrain from farther reference to them now.

3. But what comfort and hope is offered to our hearts as we linger with the weeping women before the door of the Saviour's tomb! We need not be pilgrims to the Holy Land for this; our faith in the blessed Evangelists brings us to the scene. How calmly, how quietly, he rests within! They have done unto him

* A grave was appointed for him with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb (high place). — Is. liii. 9.

whatsoever they listed, but they cannot reach him now with their savage cries, and brutal insults, and merciless tortures. They have driven him out of the world which he made for them, so fair and beautiful; out of his own Jerusalem, which he had loved so well, and wept over with so fond a pity; out of the mortal life which he had made so lovely by his innocence, and so beneficent by his miracles, and so eloquent of truth by his teachings, and so full of promise to the sorrowful by his tears, and to the penitent by his prayers. Oh, what a darkness was that when the sun hid his face from the murder of the Holy One, and the convulsed earth quaked in sympathy with her Maker! What a night was that when the stars looked down on the world, whose Saviour and Lord lay dead and buried. Think of the poor disciples, shrunk into hiding-places like timorous sheep whose shepherd is slain, and of the broken-hearted women, loving without hope, but faithful in their despair! Yet the sufferer is at rest. He sleeps. His labors are done, his pains are past, his enemies have accomplished their worst; his last cry was the escape of his spirit, and his dear, holy, mangled flesh awaits in peace a speedy awakening far beyond sorrow and ignominy, within the glory of his better world, where all the heavenly host will acclaim him an infinite homage, because the signatures of the cross attest him the Lamb that was slain. Odors, fragrant and rich, fill the air, as the spices breathe their honors around him, and the flowers of the garden are redolent through the dews. All is as sweet as it is calm. O faithful Master, thanks be to thee, that thou didst not refuse to lie down in the grave! The grave is gloomy and cold and sad, — the disgrace of our humanity, the

hiding-place of our shame. Disguise it as we may, with marbles and epitaphs, and graceful trees, and summer-blooms, and evergreens, till it looks like a palace-garden, it is yet the place of silence, darkness, and corruption; nature revolts from the thought, nor can philosophy cure us of the shudder, for reason justifies it:—

“To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,
This sensible, warm motion to become
A kneaded clod —
. 't is too horrible!”

But oh, how sad it is when we are forced to carry there and put deep within its shades, away from our touch, and sight, and care, the dear forms in which the beloved of our hearts, — the good, the kind, the true, have lived but live no longer; the pleasant faces through which their souls shone on us, the bosoms that yearned for us, the hands that ministered to our comfort, the limbs active in serving our faintest wish, — to lie out amidst loathsome damps, under the beatings of the storm, and the winter's snows, because they are dust and to dust they must return! Yet, how changed is the sepulchre since we have followed in his funeral, and seen the place where the Lord lay! He is not there now, — he is risen; but he has been there; the fragrance yet fills the tomb; the garden still blossoms around it: as, in the beginning, he, by his own rest, made the Sabbath a rest for our souls, so has he, by his own burial, made the grave a rest for the bodies of his people. There the wicked cease from troubling them; there they have a refuge from temptation, from tears and sin; there the High Priest of our profession has set a company of the guard from the heavenly temple

to watch their sleeping dust — his own seal is on the door — and in his own time, when all the mortality, and dishonor, and corruption, and weakness, have crumbled away, will he roll back the stone from its mouth, and they shall come forth immortal, glorious, incorruptible, and full of power, to enter upon the kingdom where he is now gone to prepare places for them. Oh! now we know what our church means when it bids us say that, though Christ has died for our sins, we must also die. Death and the grave are no longer the penalty and the disgrace of our nature. Christ hath taken out the sting from death, the victory he has wrested from the grave; and now death to all who believe is the abolishing of sin, the grave a passage to eternal life. The pious dead are not lost: they only sleep in Jesus, — a blessed sleep from which he is coming to awake them. He has taken up their spirits now to the Father who took up his; and he will once more descend in the latter day to the earth, that he may restore their full humanity to paradise, — far more lovely than that the tempter entered, where no enemy nor ill can reach them forever. O spirit of the Holy One, who didst anoint Christ with grace for his death and burial, prepare us for ours, that we may follow him with the countless train of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises! Then shall death be to us a gain unspeakable, and the grave a welcome rest. We need rest, O Lord, for we are often weary; and, if it please thee, we would not bear our burden long.

“ We would not live alway, thus fettered by sin,
Temptation without, and corruption within;
Where the rapture of pardon is mingled with fears,
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent tears.

We would not live alway — no, welcome the tomb;
Since Jesus hath lain there we dread not its gloom;
There sweet be our rest, till he bid us arise,
To hail him in triumph descending the skies.”

But we had wellnigh anticipated what we proposed to treat of —

THIRDLY: *The benefits we receive from Christ's death and burial.*

The Catechism says “further benefits,” because it has already made us dwell largely on the benefits of Christ's sacrifice; but we shall briefly recapitulate, and add to these stated in the present answer (43d), those given in the 44th, as taught in our Lord's descent to hell.

1. Christ as our infinite surety has borne the wrath of God for all who believe on his name. When the Father accepted the substitute, he did it under covenant to release those whom Jesus represented. He took the guilt of their sins from them in the very act by which he laid it on the sinless elder brother. So, when he paid the penalty, they paid it; when he was stricken of God it was with their stripes; when he was crucified they were crucified with him; when he died they died in him; when he was buried he sanctified the grave for them; and so, also, when the Father received his spirit, and raised him from the dead, in sure token that justice was satisfied and heaven opened for the atoner, the Father accepted them, adopted them as his sons and daughters, assured them of deliverance from eternal death, set open wide the gate of heaven for their spirits when they leave the body, and for their bodies after the purification of the grave which Christ has made fragrant with holy peace. How certain, then, is the salva-

tion of the Christian, since justice and mercy with interlinking arms stand pleading for him before the throne on which the Lamb that was slain sits at the right hand of God!

2. The sympathy of our Lord with his people is entire. "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." He has not only the power but the knowledge from experience to apply the power; and as, in the language of the New Testament, temptation and trial are synonymous, one word in the original representing both, his sympathizing grace covers all the experience of the Christian; for there is no form of trial through which the Christian can be made to pass that he did not pass through on his way to victory and rest.

All that we ordinarily call temptations, — the motives, arguments, and provocations to sin, to which we are exposed during our mortal life in this world, he knew; we have a notable example of this in the conflict he had with the devil immediately after his unction by the Holy Ghost. All that we ordinarily call trials, — our sicknesses, our pains, our persecutions, our wrongs from the false judgments, and slanders, and oppositions of men, our sorrows for those we love in their sicknesses, and deaths and burials, — we know that he knew from the record of the evangelical witnesses.

So far as his innocent spirit could feel the anguish and self-aborrence and shame of sin, he knew what the penitent suffers when, under the thunderings of the law, he trembles and avows his guilt; for all his Israel's sins were gathered around his soul, compassing his spirit about, hiding his Father's face from him, causing him to shrink with horror from the vile contact, and

pressing on his mediatorial conscience the fact that the punishment he bore was just. Nay, those very doubts which oftentimes assail the believer's mind, causing him to shrink from duty, to fear the future set before him, and even to think that God has forsaken him, assaulted the humanity of Jesus. "Now," saith he, at one time, "is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." What else was that agony in the garden, when he prayed: "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me!" and "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him?" And how else can we understand that bitter cry out of the thick darkness, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" There could not be a single form of pain, or anguish of body or soul, that follows sin, of which the Redeemer, who took the cup filled with our deserts, did not taste; and this is what the Catechism declares when it says (44th), that "our Lord Jesus Christ, during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, was plunged in inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors and hellish agonies," that he might deliver us from the anguish and torments of hell.

Here then, believer, — tempted, afflicted, weak and trembling, is there full comfort for you. The Master knows your trials and your infirmity. Only imitate his steadfastness, — be faithful to him as he was to you; and he who received a gift of strength from on high to go through his passion, will send you strength according as your day.

3. For there is here a promise of sanctification. He crucified our old nature when the body he took on him, out of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, was

crucified. There in his death, the tyrannous power of sin, by which the devil holds captive the impenitent, was broken from his people; and in his grave he finally buried the mortal flesh that he might raise it in newness of life, holy and eternal. Thus has he promised to quicken from their death in trespasses and sins, all who by faith are crucified with him, with him die, and with him are buried. As he was raised up to heaven, so shall they, even in this life, be raised up to sit with him in heavenly places: privileges so like heaven, that the apostle can give them no less an epithet than "heavenly." Yet, this grace is only vouchsafed to those who, relying on the working of God in them, work out with fear and trembling their own salvation. But, believer, what a motive as well as encouragement is here? What so separates a man from the world as death and burial? Yet so, by our profession of representation in Christ, do we profess to have died with the world of sin, and to have put off our old man with its affections and lusts. We are not dead with him, if we be not buried with him. We have not been buried with him, if we be not risen with him. Our true life, our Christian life, now lies on the other side of the grave as to its affections and aims and delights. "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." All our motives and rules must be brought by us from heaven, "into which the Forerunner has for us entered." "Truly," says an apostle, "our conversation is in heaven." Yes, beloved brethren, this is the grace into which we profess to stand, who profess by our Lord Jesus to have received the atonement. We cannot go back to the world except we trample

over the grace of Jesus, and reject the arguments of his cross.

O Son of the Highest, remember us on thy throne! Thou hast vanquished sin for us in the atonement of thy death; now vanquish sin in us by the intercession of thy life!

LECTURE XIX.

THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

SIXTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

"He descended into hell."

THIS article of our creed, which, because of its peculiar interest, requires a closer study than we could give it when considering, on a late occasion, the lesson for the Sixteenth Lord's Day, should be approached with cautious modesty, as it has been so disputed over by theologians of the highest rank, that an attempt to determine the truth among their widely different views would be presumptuous, if we had not a "more sure word of prophecy." Rejecting, as we do, the preposterous notion which the papists have adopted from the good but fanciful Bishop of Milan (St. Ambrose), — all the fathers before him saying nothing of the kind, — that the creed was composed by the inspired apostles, we cannot receive any dogma it contains on less authority than divine Scripture; yet, since we have adopted it as the symbol of our catholic, evangelical belief, we must understand its articles "according to the proportion (or rather analogy) * of faith," as the apostle calls the consistency of Christian doctrine.

But, FIRST: it should be noted that the descent into hell is not found as a separate, distinct article of the earlier creeds. In the Nicene (A. D. 325) we read: "He suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again," — the descent into hell not being inserted; in that

* ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. — Rom. xii. 6.

vulgarly attributed to Athanasius (A. D. 333) we read : " Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead," — the burial being omitted ; from which comparison it would seem that the two phrases were then thought to be synonymous. But nearly all the learned, outside the papal ranks, deny that Athanasius wrote the formula called by his name. Waterland, on strong grounds, ascribes it to Hilary (Bishop) of Arles, which would bring it a century later ; and certainly it was not known through the church until the close of the sixth. Rufinus, Bishop of Aquileia* (a great city in the Venetian territory), says that his church had both articles in its creed, but that the Roman and Eastern churches had only the burial ; and he thought that the two meant the same thing,† one, perhaps, being explanatory of the other, if not a mere expletive. It is not known at what time they came to be interpreted distinctly, though Erasmus thought that it began with Thomas Aquinas (*circa* 1305) ; but, undoubtedly, some opinions now held respecting our Lord's descent into hell were promulgated at an early period. Witsius (the noble doctor of our mother-church) cites the historian Socrates, to show that a company of about fifty Arians at Constantinople (A. D. 359) published a creed which says : " He was crucified, and died, and was buried and penetrated (διεληλυθότα) into parts beneath the earth (καταχθόνια), at whom hell (ᾅδης) itself was struck with terror." But Witsius might have found in the same historian a creed rejected by the council of Ariminum (Rimini), who deposed the Arian bishops ‡ that had

* Nona inter claras, Aquileia, urbes. — *Ausonius*.

† Vis tamen verbi eadem videtur esse in eo quod sepultus dicitur.

‡ Ursatius and Valens.

presented it (A. D. 356), which has these expressions : " Was crucified and died, and descended into parts infernal, and set in order what was to be done there, at (the sight of) whom the doorkeepers of hell trembled."* Such language intends considerably more than mere burial.

We are careful to observe these historical facts, because they prove that the insertion of the article, " He descended into hell," as meaning more than his burial, was made by heretics ; † and that, though now the papists connect with it their doctrine of purgatory, and kindred follies, the creed of the early church had nothing between the burial and the resurrection. The descent into hell is in the creed of the church of Rome now. How it got there nobody knows, but it certainly was not before the fifth century, probably not until long after.

SECONDLY : It is, nevertheless, a scriptural fact that our Lord descended into hell, as we learn from a collation of Psalm xvi. 9, 10, 11, with Acts ii. 23–32. In the psalm we read : " My flesh also shall rest in hope ; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life." In the other scripture, the apostle Peter at the Pentecost says : " Him (Jesus of Nazareth) by wicked hands ye have crucified and slain ; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him : I foresaw the Lord always before my face ;

* Not having the Greek at hand, I quote the English translation, fol. Cambridge, 1683, p. 272.

† At Seleucia, Acacius withdrew the passages, but no doubt from craft, as he restored them at Constantinople.

for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover, also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Thus the apostle, as well as the psalmist, in saying that our Lord was not left in hell, implies that he had been there; and since we must believe the words of Scripture, we should rightly understand what those words mean.

1. The Hebrew and the Greek originals have each two words of different signification, to render which our translators had but the one word, *hell*. The Hebrew has *gehenna* (גֵּהֶנָּה) and *sheol* (שְׁאוֹל): *gehenna* signifying the place where the wicked after death are in fiery torment, or hell in the present sense of that word among us; *sheol* signifying the region beneath the surface of the ground, but most frequently the place of the dead, or the grave — though in a few texts, by a natural figure, destruction. *Sheol*, not *gehenna*, is the word in the psalm: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *sheol*," i. e. in the place or state of the dead, or

the grave. The writers of the New Testament adopted *gehenna* from the Hebrew, and use it to signify the place of future punishment (*γέεννα*, rendered throughout our translation by *hell*;) but whenever they speak of the state or place of the dead, they use the word *hades* (*ᾗδης*) as equivalent to *sheol*. Thus Luke in the parable has: "The rich man also died and was buried; and in (*hades*) hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Both were in *hades*, or the state, — place, if you will, — of the dead; but one in torments, the other a great way off, in Abraham's bosom. Throughout our English Vulgate, *hades* is rendered by *hell*,* except in 1 Corinthians xv. 55, where we have *grave*: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave (*hades*), where is thy victory?" *Hades* is the word in Peter's citation of the psalm.

Thus neither the psalmist nor the apostle says that our Lord went into the place of punishment, but the contrary; as otherwise the reasoning of Peter would be that David had gone to torment, and is there still, — a conclusion from which every one would shrink.

2. Then, again, the Hebrew word rendered soul, *nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ), does not necessarily, nor even radically, signify what we understand by soul, — the spiritual, moral part of man. Its primary sense is *breath*, or the *life*, whether of man or beast. Nay, there are passages where it signifies a corpse or exanimate body, as Hag-gai ii. 13: "If one that is unclean by a dead body" (*nephesh*); and Lev. xix. 28: "Thou shalt not make

* There is no doubt that *hell* has both the senses: the place of punishment, and the place of the dead, — the last the primary one. *Hülle* (G.), *hell*; *höhle* (G.), *hole*. Hence the common people associate hell with gloomy caverns, — hell-gate, hell's-mouth, devil's chimney, etc., etc.

any cuttings in your flesh for the dead" (*nephesh*). So, also, xxi.; but especially Numbers vi. 6: "All the days that he separateth himself to the Lord, he shall come at no dead body" (*nephesh*). Thus we might consistently translate it in the psalm: "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my body in the grave, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." For the most part, however, *nephesh* is used as the word *person* by us: that which presents the idea of the man to us; as we say, "there were so many persons present," or, so many souls were there; and, "not a soul," or, "not a person was present." It is, in fact, a frequent orientalism for the personal pronouns; so that it would be also consistent to read: "Thou wilt not leave *me* in the state of the dead." Either of these renderings would be justified by that peculiarity of Hebrew poetry called *parallelism*, which repeats in the second, with some difference of phrase, the idea of the first line: "Thou wilt not leave me, or my person, or my body, in the grave; nor wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." Certainly *Holy One* can scarcely apply to an exanimate body merely, but must refer to the person whose body is in the grave; for the term rendered *Holy One* in both the languages is not holy in the sense of dedicated, but in the absolutely *moral* sense of *pious*, or godly; and the psalmist would not speak of a pious or godly corpse.

The apostle's term for soul (*nephesh*) is $\psi\chi\eta$: a term corresponding to the Hebrew word in many particulars, though not in all, but certainly, as many passages from the classics show,* to the sense of person; and we

* Euripides, Helena, v. 52. Her. Furens. v. 452. Theocritus, Id. xvi. 24. C. Mulea.

should interpret it accordingly. This is in accordance with the common habit of language. Martha said of her brother Lazarus: "Lord, by this time *he* stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." So our Lord said: "Where have ye laid him?" and the apostle Paul (Acts xiii. 35, 37) "Wherefore he (David) saith also in another Psalm: Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy (pious) One to see corruption; but *he*, whom God raised up again, saw no corruption." We see, therefore, that *soul*, here, does not necessarily, nor even probably, mean our Lord's spiritual soul in the first parallel, any more than *Holy One* does in the second.

This is a fair critical interpretation of the passages on which the descent into hell is mainly founded, and the one admitted by the great part of the learned, especially by all the eminent doctors of the reformed churches from Calvin down; yet, since it has obtained a place in the creed of the catholic church, a great variety of opinions have been given concerning it by theologians, both Papist and Protestant.

We shall, therefore, state some of these: first, those of the Papists, and of such as agree with them partly, among the Protestants; then, those of the reformed churches, to whose communion by the blessing of God we belong.

1. The ancient Jews, to whom "life and immortality" were not revealed as they have since been by the gospel, had an indistinct notion of a great region beneath the surface of the ground, whither not only the bodies of men went (in burial), but their spirits lived after death, — the good in bliss, the wicked in misery. This corresponded with the Egyptian and classical notions: we might say with the universal idea of

cultivated nations. Men at death were said to descend, — go down somewhere, (“*Facilis descensus*” “*ad inferos*.”) The neo-platonic philosophers, who were in full force at Alexandria during the earlier Christian centuries, and mingled Greek with Egyptian doctrines, had, also, according to their wont, adopted many myths from the popular superstitions, as all the Orphic writings show. Some of the fathers, learned in both Christian and neo-platonic systems, but converted at a time of life when few men can wholly change their inveterate sentiments, still less their phraseology, transferred, without any scriptural authority, not a few figments of superstition to their new faith; especially mingling these about the state of the dead with the Christian doctrine. The Arians, sympathizing with the Alexandrian notion of the *Logos*, would be likely to carry their bias farther. Hence, we are not surprised to find them (as has been shown) interpolating the creed with their fancy respecting our Lord’s descent into *hades*. The opinion obtained some favor even with the more orthodox, as it tallied to a certain extent with the rabbinical teachings that had obtained popular credence among the Jews, and given a tinge of language to some scriptural passages. We have no more respect for the Rabbins than for the Hermaic teachers; but we are disposed to consider what they quote who have adopted their general idea. The principal texts are these three: Eph. iv. 9, where it is said that our Lord “descended into the lower parts of the earth;” 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, 20, where it is said that our Lord by the spirit went and “preached to the spirits in prison;” Luke xxiii. 43, where our Lord said to the penitent thief, “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Misinterpret-

ing these texts, they divided the abode of the dead — *sheol, hades, hell*, — into two main parts: one the place of the pious ancients who believed in Messiah, but died before his “manifestation to Israel;” the other, the prison (*gehenna*) of the wicked; with some minor partitions we need not stay to describe. Christ, said they, descended to this lower region first, to make known to the pious spirits his full gospel, that, through faith in his finished work, they might obtain full salvation, which they did by rising with him when he rose; but, also, to confound with his power and glory the devils and wicked souls. Afterwards, by degrees, these notions were somewhat modified and enlarged, until they composed out of them the doctrine of purgatory, with its kindred follies; which is, that the spirits of even Christians (except martyrs and some few others) after death need a *purgation*, or cleansing by fire; and are, for that purpose, shut up in suffering until either sins are burned away, or they are freed from the necessity by the prayers of the church, accompanying the repeated sacrifices of Christ’s body in the mass. This is what the papists mean by saying masses for the repose of souls. The doctrine of purgatory has been, as is well known, a most fruitful source of simoniacal gain and profit to that artful mistress of abominations, who leaves no means untried to subject mankind by terror of her pretended authority, here and in the next world; but time would fail to give even the briefest account of the many follies uttered by them in connection with the main dogma. It is remarkable, however, that it (the doctrine of purgatory) was never formally affirmed by the church of Rome until the council of Florence, 1439, and has been steadily rejected by

the Eastern churches of all ages. Strange that it should have taken thirteen centuries for an infallible church to find out a doctrine of religion! The immaculate conception, however, lagged far behind. God deliver us from such developments of church-life!

There is, also, out of the church of Rome, and principally (if not altogether, nowadays) among high-church Episcopalians, a party more considerable for learning than numbers, who, adopting the ancient notion of *sheol*, or *hades*, contends that at death neither the righteous go to *heaven*, nor the wicked to hell (prepared for the devil and his angels); but that, until the resurrection, the good are in bliss, the wicked in torments, though far apart, and that neither the bliss of the one nor the misery of the other, will be complete until the soul is again united to the body. This region, or condition, intervening between the death of the body and the resurrection, they call, for want of a better term, the separate state; because there disembodied souls exist apart from living men on earth, and from the angels in heaven.

It is not easy to see why this notion is so much insisted upon; as while, at the best, its advocates are able to give but a vague, shadowy idea of what they mean by it, they gain no practical benefit over the vast majority of the orthodox who hold another opinion, but, as we think, lose much comfort; for all well-taught Christians believe that, though the disembodied soul of the wicked man goes to the hell of fire, and the soul of the pious man goes to heaven, at once, the one will receive a great accession of misery, the other of bliss, when souls are united again to their proper bodies; because then the *entire man* will suffer or enjoy with

greater intensity. But as was said before, the number even of Episcopalians holding this doctrine is comparatively small, many of the same creed opposing it strenuously, others speaking of it very doubtingly; nor has it any place in their articles or liturgy; * and, as it is based on the same texts as the Romish doctrine of purgatory, a due examination of those texts will suffice to refute both.

a. When the apostle in Ephesians (iv. 9) asserts that our Lord "descended into the lower parts of the earth," he simply, according to his Hebraistic habit of language, means to describe the Saviour's extreme humiliation for us, in submitting to poverty of life, the shame of the cross, and even to the disgraces of the grave in his burial under ground. He could not as a man descend lower. It was from the uttermost depths of human ignominy that he ascended to the sublimest height of glory in heaven, bearing up with him his cross-scarred, once dead and buried body, to the right hand of his Father's throne.

b. The text in 1 Peter (iii. 18, 19), quoted to prove that our Lord went after his death, and preached to the spirits in prison, teaches no such thing. For, if we read from the 14th verse, we see that the apostle is exhorting Christians to steadfastness and patience under

* The XLth article adopted in the reign of Edward VI. condemns the doctrine of the soul sleeping between death and the resurrection, but says nothing about a separate state. The expressions in the prayer of the Burial-Service: "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity;" . . . and that God would hasten his kingdom "that all the elect might have their perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul," are quite as much in conformity with our opinions, if not more so, and were, no doubt, like many other things in the book, adopted, at the farthest, as a compromise of sentiments on things not essential.

calumny and persecution: "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an *answer* to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a *good conscience*; . . . for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye *suffer* for well-doing than for evil-doing." Then, to encourage them in this patient steadfastness, he gives two examples of fidelity and deliverance: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh," — persecuted to that last extremity, — "but," not abandoned by God, "quickened by the Spirit, even by the Holy Ghost who raised him gloriously;" then again: "by which," the same Spirit which moved him to his mission of suffering and mercy, and delivered him triumphantly, "also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." He did preach to the spirits in prison, but not when they were in prison, neither did he go personally after his death to preach to them: he preached to them by the Holy Spirit in Noah, when they were living on earth at the time the ark was a preparing; for the neglect of whose warnings they were drowned, and cast into the prison of hell where they have been ever since, as they were at the time Peter wrote. Christ, in Noah, by his Spirit, preached to them before the flood, just as in his ministers he preaches to us by his Spirit now.

Noah, acting under the influence of this Spirit of Christ as a preacher of truth, *suffered* many trials, but was delivered out of them all in the ark which bore him safely over the waters that submerged the wicked to hell. Now, reasons the apostle, "the like figure (that is, the ark on the water) whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us" who are suffering persecutions by making us one with Christ — "baptism (not [like circumcision which was] the putting away of the filth of the flesh but [see verses 15, 16] the *answer* of a *good conscience* toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," which is the earnest of our eternal, complete redemption. This is the only view of the passage that will connect its several parts from the 14th verse to the end; while, on the other hand, there is no fitness between Christian steadfastness, which is the apostle's theme, and Christ's preaching to souls in purgatory. There are other good reasons against the papistical interpretation, but what has been said is sufficient.

c. It has also been contended that the *Paradise* into which (Luke xxiii. 43) our Lord promised the penitent thief admission with himself, the very day they died, must be some other place than heaven, and, therefore, the separate place of faithful souls. We cannot allow either supposition; but see the contrary. By sin man lost paradise, where he had enjoyed the favor of God, and was driven out of it; and, now that our Lord had expiated sin for the restoration of his people to divine favor, what more natural or appropriate than to call the state of his people's recovered blessedness, paradise? What more in harmony with the great truth than that he, as the second Adam, should, his work of salvation being finished, reënter paradise as

the head of his new race, taking, as a trophy of his merits and as an earnest of his church, the converted malefactor into its holy, blissful beauty? We cannot imagine a better name for the heaven of the recovered humanity, than paradise. Why should there not be a second paradise when there is a second Adam?

Besides, the first paradise was not the abode of unembodied spirits, but of man integrally, body and soul: with what propriety or intelligibleness can its name be given to a sphere where man never is, bodily? Is not heaven, which has always been the abode of pure, holy spirits, the more fitting place for the spirit of a just man when disembodied?

There is, moreover, no warrant in Scripture for such a definition of paradise. The word, which literally means a garden, is used by the Seventy for the Garden of Eden, and in the New Testament occurs in only two places besides our text: once in 2 Corinthians xii. 4, and in Revelation ii. 7.

In the first, the whole passage taken together interprets itself. "I knew," says he, speaking of himself, "a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth) — such a man caught up to the third heaven; and I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) — how that he was caught up into paradise, where he heard unspeakable words." Now, here, before we go farther, we must note two things that make it most unlikely for Paul to have had the views of paradise which they have, against whom we argue. They declare roundly that it is the separate place of faithful spirits only; but Paul, who must have known this if it were so, cannot

tell whether he went there in his body or out of it. Had he gone to such a place, it must have been in spirit, as they say Christ did. Then they situate paradise in *sheol*, or *hades*; and throughout in Scripture, men are said to *go down* into *sheol*, as here in the creed: "He *descended* into hell;" but Paul was "*caught up* into paradise:" went there in the same direction — upward — that he went to the third heaven. The utter discrepancy is manifest.

But, on taking the whole passage, the two statements only describe, to any unbiased judgment, one rapture, — not two, as our opponents think; for it is only after the second statement that he states what occurred in his vision, *i. e.* he "heard unspeakable words." After his manner, writing as he did for Gentiles and Jews, he repeats his first statement, using for the state of the blest the word to which his Hebrew readers were accustomed. Not improbably (as we think), he meant to teach them that, contrary to the popular opinion derived from the rabbins, paradise was not in *sheol*, or "the lower parts of the earth," but in the third heaven, which all admit is the immediate presence of God.* If there was only one rapture, therefore, our point is proved; but if there were two, it by no means proves that paradise is a state separate from heaven.

For, in Rev. ii. 7, we read: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Now, where the tree of life is, there is paradise; but in the 22d chapter (1, 2) we read again: "He showed me a pure river

* Paul certainly had two raptures or visions, at least, before this: one at his conversion, near Damascus; another shortly after, at Jerusalem. Acts xxii. 17. But both were more than fourteen years before the date of the epistle, that, at the earliest, was written A. D. 56 — probably later.

of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life." Where the throne of God and the Lamb is, there is the highest heavens, the place of final blessedness (see Rev. vii. 9); but the tree of life is planted near the throne; therefore, there is paradise. Compare, also, with the text, Rev. iii. 21, where, to him that overcometh, Christ promises a seat on his throne. The promises are parallel. In a word, what more natural than that, when the Spirit describes the restoration of man to blessedness, he should describe it by the images of the first paradise, and the tree of life, of which man was not there permitted to eat.

Before we entirely dismiss these controverted texts, let us put alongside of them several which are not controverted. The apostle in Philippians i. 21-23, says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Now Christ is, all admit, in heaven, — body and soul. When, therefore, Christ in life, that is, the living to Christ here, is exchanged for departing to be with Christ, it must be because the soul will then go to heaven, where Christ is; which is, indeed, "far better." The reply offered to this is that Christ by his divinity is omnipresent, and, also, by his Spirit present with his saints in their separate state; but this is rather a quibble than an argument, since it was not necessary for the apostle to depart to be with Christ in that sense; as he is here in his omnipresence and by his Spirit until the end of the world. The apostle evidently means a *personal* nearness to his Lord. So he says, 2 Cor. v. 5-8,

even when anticipating the fulness of the resurrection: "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent (not at home) from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight (that is, in this life): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent* from the body (not at home in the body), and to be present (at home) with the Lord." Certainly, this means personal nearness and actual vision; for the contrast is of sight to faith. And where is the Christian's home — his dwelling, not in a foreign land, but with his people? In *sheol*, or heaven? In corroboration of this, see what Stephen the martyr saw and said at his death, Acts vii. 55: "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. . . . And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Where would the Lord Jesus receive the soul of his saint, but where he himself is?

Other corroboratory passages might be added, but these will answer our purpose.

II. The doctors of the reformed churches, finding the article in the creed, and not wishing to reject it, though having no respect for the dogmas of the papists, expounded it in a sense conformable to the word of God. Thus Calvin (Ins. ii. 16, 10): "Nothing had been done if Christ had endured only corporeal death. To interpose between us and the anger of God, and satisfy his righteous judgment, it was necessary that he

* Ἐκδημέως — ἐκ and δῆμος — exiled, expatriated, away from one's people.

should feel the weight of divine vengeance. Whence, also, it was necessary that he should engage at close quarters, as it were, with the powers of hell, and the horrors of eternal death. He undertook and paid all the penalties which must have been exacted from them (for whom he was Surety), the only exception being that the pains of hell could not hold him. Hence, there is nothing strange in its being said that "he descended into hell," as he endured the death which is inflicted on the wicked by an angry God. It is but a frivolous and ridiculous objection to say that this perverts the order of the creed, putting after the burial what preceded it. For, after explaining what Christ endured in the sight of man, the creed appropriately adds the invisible and incomprehensible judgment which he endured before (in the sight of) God, to teach us that not only was the body of Christ given up for our redemption, but that there was a greater and more excellent price: "That he bore in his soul the tortures of condemned and ruined men."

The same view is given by the authors of the "Heidelberg Catechism," in the 44th Question and Answer: "Why is there added: 'He descended into hell?'" That, in my greatest temptations, I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell." With this the reformed theologians universally agree.

That our Lord did so suffer the wrath of God, and the curse due to us in his spirit, there can be no doubt; but that such was the meaning of the article when

added to the creed after the burial, is not so clear. Yet the edification and comfort so derived is not less; nor are we forbidden to think, if we choose, that it was inserted to comply with the scripture of the 16th Psalm, as quoted by the apostle at the Pentecost.

It may, however, be properly asked, how, if we reject, as we do, the notion of an intermediate state, was the time between his death on the cross and his burial spent by our Lord?

To this our answer is, that, as he commended his departing spirit into the hands of his Father, and promised to take the penitent thief the same day into paradise, we believe that the soul of our Lord did go immediately to God in heaven. The next day being the Sabbath, the second Adam rested with God, after accomplishing the new creation, as the first Adam rested with Him after the former creation, in paradise.

The rest of the Sabbath being over, the soul of our Lord descended on the morning of the first day of the week, from heaven into *sheol*, or the grave, or the state of the dead; not to be under the power of death, but as a conqueror, to take up again his body from under the earth. In the metaphorical language of Scripture, we may suppose that there was a conflict between our Lord, now the Lord of life, and "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;" for he is said to have vanquished the last enemy, — his spoils being his own ransomed body, which he displayed openly. Thus we read: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts ii. 24). So, also, in the 68th Psalm (18th v.): "Thou hast ascended up on

high; thou hast led captivity captive;" upon which the apostle (Ephes. iv. 8-10) comments: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same, also, that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." And again in Col. ii. 15: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it," or by it, — his resurrection and ascension. As a conqueror in an ancient triumph showed not only the spoils of his conquest, but exhibited his vanquished foes in chains about his car, so did Christ, bearing aloft his own body, the earnest of all the bodies of his people, manifest his power. Thus Hosea (xiii. 14): "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" On which the apostle (1 Cor. xv. 54-56): "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but, thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Or, as Heber sings in his magnificent hymn for Easter: —

"Now empty are the courts of death,
And crushed thy sting, Despair;
And roses bloom in the desert tomb,
For Jesus hath been there.

"And he hath tamed the strength of hell
And dragged him through the sky;

And captive behind his chariot wheel
He hath bound captivity.

"God hath gone up with a merry shout
Of his saints that sing on high;
With his own right hand and his holy arm
He hath won the victory!"

Is it presumptuous to say that this view of the subject meets the questions, and corresponds with the testimony of Scripture?

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

FIRST: *The completeness of Christ's work for us.*

He exhausted the curse in his sufferings, and there remains no hell for the believer.

He follows us even into the regions of the dead, and bursting the bars of death, opens the way for our resurrection.

He hath made death our servant and friend.

SECONDLY: *The blessedness of the believer's death.*

It is following Christ out of this life to heaven.

It is the departure of the soul, not into prison, or sleep, but into the presence of God.

It is leaving the body of sin and death in the grave, to be kept and purified by Christ until a glorious resurrection.

LECTURE XX.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

VOL. I.

27

SEVENTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

QUEST. XLV. *What doth the resurrection of Christ profit us?*

ANS. First, by his resurrection he hath overcome death that he might make us of that righteousness which he had purchased for us by his death; secondly, we are also by his power raised up to a new life; and, lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.

"THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD."

IF you take this article away from our creed, the whole system of evangelical doctrine is dissolved and crumbles to the ground like a building from under which the corner-stone has been dragged out. The prophets before him, our Lord himself, and the apostles after him, stake the credibility of the gospel in all its parts and as a whole, on the one fact of his resurrection from the dead (*a*). Without it the divinity of his person (*b*), the genuineness of his mission (*c*), the efficacy of his atonement (*d*), and the eternal life of his people (*e*) would be, not only without proof, but proved to be falsehoods. "If Christ be not risen," says the apostle, "then is our (*a*) preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Again, he speaks of himself as "separated unto the gospel of God . . . concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and (*b*) declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Again,

preaching to the Athenians on Mars-hill, he opens the doctrine of the mediatorship: "Now commandeth" God "all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness (*c*) by that *man whom he hath ordained*: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that *he hath raised him from the dead*." Again: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins:" which corresponds with the testimony in Romans — "To us also it" (that is the righteousness of faith which Abraham had) "shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again (*d*) for our justification." So, also, the apostle Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath (*e*) begotten us again unto a lively hope (a hope of life) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Indeed, the testimony of the Old Testament throughout foretold the humiliation and consequent exaltation of the Messiah, as our Lord showed when, walking with the two disciples to Emmaus, he said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Hence the resurrection of our Lord has been justly denominated the cardinal fact of Christianity;

and we cannot over-estimate the importance of rightly understanding its vital relation to all the principles of our most holy faith. This is taught us in the 45th Question and Answer of the Catechism, under three comprehensive heads, which suggest the proper order for our thought, after some preliminary observations on matter brought before us by the phraseology of the creed.

By the resurrection of Christ we mean what the words of the article literally signify: "He rose again from the dead." As he actually died and not merely swooned away (of which his murderers certified themselves before he was taken down from the cross), so he actually rose up from death, leaving the tomb in which he had lain a living man. The same body which he took on him out of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, (blessed was she above women, and blessed the fruit of her womb!) was crucified; the same body in which he was crucified, was buried, and so the same body rose up from the grave. It was not a phantasm, or mere semblance of a body, but a real, substantial body, identical with that which he had before his death; and in it the wounds he received on the cross were clearly visible. Thus, when he appeared to his disciples in the evening, they were "terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit, and he said unto them: Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts (disputes) arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet" (those dear hands and feet which had been pierced by the nails), "that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And, when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet be-

lieved not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb; and he took it and did eat before them . . . Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." The evangelist John farther informs us that Thomas, the apostle, was not present on this occasion, and when told of it by the rest, he doubted the story and said: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you! Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold (perceive) my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." So also the apostle Peter, when preaching to Cornelius and his friends in Cesarea, says: "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." These were palpable, unmistakable proofs that the visible form of Jesus was a real, substantial, living body, — the same that was crucified.

At the same time, the manner and character of the corporeal life which our Lord had when visible to his disciples on earth after his resurrection must have differed in some important particulars from those of the

life he had had before his death; and, for the same reasons, his body must have been changed, not as to identity or essential quality, but as to its mode of being. It becomes us to speak here with a reverent modesty, yet we cannot and ought not to blink the questions which necessarily arise.

The life which he received and exercised then was not derived, as his former life or our ordinary life, from physical generation and growth, but from the immediate will of God. His former life was necessarily, because of his body's natural tendency to decay, mortal. The death of Christ in his human nature was as much the inevitable consequence of his being born of a woman as ours is. Nay, one of the main reasons why he became a partaker of our flesh and blood was, that he might die and, as the writer to the Hebrews says, "through death . . . destroy him that had the power of death;" which he could not have done in any other nature than human. But the life of Christ after his resurrection was in its nature immortal, and his blessed body incapable of decay or any of those weaknesses which arise from a tendency to corruption. It was the same life that he has now at the right hand of the Father; and, therefore, his body had all those properties that his body has, and the bodies of his saints will have after their resurrection, in heaven. This body and the change through which it passes, is described by the apostle in the 15th of 1 Corinthians: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural (animal) body, it is raised a spiritual body; and so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul (that is,

made for an animal life); the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Now no one may pretend to understand the full meaning of these remarkable antithetical phrases (we must wait till the light of heaven for that); but this much we can, with the aid of other scriptures, discover: The heavenly life of the man Christ Jesus, and of his people after their resurrection, having a spiritual, not an animal source, will be so far spiritual as to be set free from all animal necessities and infirmities; such as dependence on food and breath, and liability to passion, appetite, weariness, sickness, and decay. So, by consequence, their bodies will be etherealized, purged from all grossness, no longer a hindrance to their souls, but sympathizing with, and partaking of, spiritual activity and indefatigable self-supporting energy. In a word, though we have not now time to enter upon the edifying comparison, the glorified body of Christ, as it was seen by the three disciples, transfigured on the top of Tabor, was the pre-manifestation of his heavenly body, and the pattern after which the bodies of the redeemed will be transfigured at the resurrection. "Our conversation is in heaven," says the apostle, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working" (energy, which is the operation of the Holy Spirit,) "whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself;" or again in the aforecited chapter of 1 Corinthians: "As we have borne the image of the earthly" (that is, of the first Adam who was formed from the earth), "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (that is, of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven). Let it not be objected to this view of

our Lord's body after his resurrection, that he did actually partake of food. So did the angels who appeared in bodily shape to Abraham and Lot. It was but a gracious condescension of Christ to the weak minds of his disciples, the more readily to convince them that he was the same Lord who had so often broken bread with them before; not because he needed the sustenance requisite for a mortal life. Our own Witsius on this quotes with high approbation a passage of St. Augustine: "To be incapable of taking food, or to stand in need of food, would be equally an evidence of imperfection in the revived body. The parched earth swallows up water in a very different manner from that in which it is taken up by the burning sun. The one does it from need, the other by power." For a like reason, our Lord did not, during the forty days, appear to the disciples in his glory. They could not have identified him in such radiance with the man of sorrows, neither could they with their sensual eyes have looked upon him and lived, as we know from the experience of the three witnesses who, on the holy mount, became as "dead men."

While, however, we believe that the body of our Lord was gloriously changed, we must reject the vain notions of papists and others, that it became infinitely divisible and omnipresent, as they contend that it is in the mass. It continued to be a human body, and, therefore, limited to such space as a human body naturally occupies; nor is it possible, in the nature of things, even for a miracle to transubstantiate the sacramental bread in the priest's hands, so as to make it part of Christ's body, which is in heaven.

We should note, also, the language of the article:

"He rose." He rose from the dead by his own mediatorial power. He had purchased the right of uprising, by his blood shed in expiation of sin. Yet, in many passages we read that God, even God the Father, raised him up; and, in several, the quickening is ascribed to the energy of the Holy Ghost. The same is said of his incarnation: "God sent his Son, made of a woman;" "the Holy Ghost came upon the virgin, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her; yet he took upon him the form of a servant;" he took part of flesh and blood. So with his death: "It pleased the Father to bruise him," and to "make his soul (life) an offering for sin; and though he of his own will laid down his life for his friends, it was through the eternal Spirit that "he offered himself without spot to God." There is no contradiction in these several statements, but a declaration of the consent and coëfficiency of the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity in the several processes of the redemption. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Amen!

The article farther particularizes that it was the *third day* on which our Lord rose again from the dead. This is according to several scriptures, particularly Christ's own words shortly after his transfiguration (Mark ix. 31), and was literally true; for he expired on the afternoon of the day before the Jewish Sabbath (our Friday), and rose on the morning of the first day of the week. But other scriptures seem to have foretold that the interval would be three days, or three days and three nights. He himself said to the Jews, speaking of his body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" and again: "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so

shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." But there is properly neither discrepance nor difficulty in this, the two expressions in the Hebrew manner of speech meaning the same thing. They began the day of twenty-four hours in the evening, and called it the evening and the morning, like the Greek night-day; and also reckoned a part of a day as the whole. So, as our Lord remained dead part of three days, they would express it by three days and three nights. Any objection to the truth of our Lord is frivolous, and any attempt to explain it otherwise than we have done would be incorrect. Our Lord and his disciples would not make so manifest a contradiction of themselves as the use of three days and three nights in any other sense would have been. He continued dead long enough to disprove the suspicion that he had only swooned, but not long enough, especially as his dear body was wrapt around with spices, to "see corruption."

He rose on the first day of the week, thus ushering in a new world; whence the early Christians under apostolical authority, which was equivalent to revelation, for they acted under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, transferred the weekly rest, or Sabbath, from the seventh day to that of the resurrection. After this we have no trace of their keeping the seventh day, but many instances of their meeting together for Christian worship, instruction, and communion, on the first day of the week, to which they gave the name of the Lord's day (Rev. i. 10). The doctrine of the Sabbath will be handled at large in its proper place; but, while we devoutly acknowledge the obligation of the Sabbath to be perpetual, we cannot err in following apostolical

example in connecting the Sabbath rest with the resurrection of him who is Lord of the Sabbath. The change is but another honor done to the mediatorial kingship of Christ, who appointed his Sabbath as the Creator in the beginning had appointed his. The transference of divine authority to the Mediator was aptly signalized by a change of the day symbolical of worship. It meets the instincts of the Christian heart. Man yet guiltless, the representative of God over the works of his hands, might enjoy, as he needed, communion with the Creator to prepare him for his holy duty; but man the sinner, whose only hope is in the merits of him whom the Father honors, and whose evangelical duty is in the kingdom of the Son, needs and can enjoy divine communion with his Saviour, and only through him can he reach communion with the Father, our God in Christ.

The last day of the week has for us no associations or warrant of hope. It leads us only to the tomb, where he, who had promised to redeem Israel, lies dead and cold, and, to all human sight, vanquished by our great enemy; but, on the morning of the first day, we meet a risen Saviour, triumphant over death, and victorious for us. Then, throughout the day, more than on any other, does he delight to mingle with us by his spirit, whether in our solitary searchings for him as man, or in our social converse, like the two disciples talking together as they walked, or in the full assembly, as the ten with the devout women. Oh, who that has enjoyed such communion with the Lord, can doubt that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has blessed our Sabbath day, and hallowed it?

Now, on what authority does the article before us

require our faith in the fact that our Lord rose again from the dead on the third day? We answer solely on the authority of the apostles. There are, it is true, corroboratory proofs from external history, but as Christians we can base our belief only on inspired records. The story, as told by the evangelists with such wonderful agreement, is, indeed, a testimony to its own truthfulness; but two of the four were themselves apostles, and the other two companions of apostles, — Mark of Peter, and Luke of Paul. So it is on the apostolical testimony alone that we depend. This was the divine arrangement. In all the dispensation of the gospel, it is the order of God that they who are saved should be saved by faith and not by sight. The pride of human scepticism must be broken down by the truth, mighty through the accompanying power of God. It had been easy for the risen Saviour to have showed himself alive to the Sanhedrim and all the people of Jerusalem; but such is not the divine method. Our Lord during his life did exhibit before them every sufficient and prophetic proof of his Messiahship; yet they wickedly rejected and crucified him. After his death and resurrection, he demonstrates the truth of his gospel, not by mere human suffrages, but by its own divinity and his confirming spirit. It was graciously due to those who had believed on him during his life of humiliation, that they should behold him risen; and it is most probable, we might say certain, that he did show himself alive after his passion, to all such believers; but for others, the testimony of the appointed witnesses was to be enough. So the apostle Peter, in the first sermon to the Gentiles, says: "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto

witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." In conformity to this we are told, that all true believers, who constitute by aggregation the church of God, are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,—the testimony of the prophets before Christ, and the testimony of the apostles after him, being united in his person, history, and works, as the Saviour. Nay, one of the chief purposes for which the apostleship was ordained was to testify of our Lord's resurrection; and a main, indispensable qualification for the office was that the one chosen should have seen the Lord after his resurrection. Thus, in the aforecited passage (Luke xxiv. 46-8), our Lord, in the evening of the day on which he arose, after having showed them his wounds and illuminated them with a knowledge of the Scriptures, added: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." So, when the eleven before the Pentecost thought it necessary to put one in the place of Iscariot, Peter said that one must be ordained to be a witness of his (the Lord's) resurrection.

Paul, called afterwards to be the apostle to the Gentiles, received this qualification by special vision of Christ, and vindicates his claim to the apostleship, which it would seem some had challenged by demanding: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus the Lord?" And in another place, he says, after speaking of the other witnesses to the resurrection: "Last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

For this reason among others, we of the reformed churches consider that the apostolical office ceased with the first college, and that it is wholly unscriptural to hold of any minister in the church since, that he is a successor of the apostles as such. The apostles were also preachers, and we should be sorry to deny the right of any ordained minister of any evangelical church, to follow the apostles as a preacher of the word; but at the same time we confidently and flatly deny that any preacher or minister of any rank, of any church, can be a successor of the apostles in any other sense, and consider such pretensions preposterous, arrogant, contrary to the truth of God. For, besides its being necessary to an apostle that he should be appointed immediately by Christ, should have the gift of inspiration, should be able to work miracles and to confer the grace of the Holy Ghost,—none of which marks are discernible in those who claim the office nowadays—it were enough to vitiate their assumption that they have not seen the Lord Jesus.

While, however, we receive the fact on the authority of the Holy Ghost in the apostles, the same Spirit bear-

ing witness in our hearts that their word is true, we should be irrational not to inquire on what grounds their testimony is put beyond impeachment.

If Christ be not risen, as they state, Christianity is the most consummate imposture, and the result of the basest conspiracy that the world has ever seen. But this is impossible; for let us consider, first: The character of the witnesses. They were,—with the doubtful exceptions of Matthew, the publican, among the eleven who were with Christ from the beginning, and of Paul, who was added four years after the crucifixion,—simple, unlearned, inexperienced, born in a rude country and bred to humble callings,—men most unlikely to originate such a scheme or to dare the risk of carrying it on. They were, also, ordinarily shrewd and not easily deceived as to facts that came under their immediate observation. But, if they had been deceived by the pretensions of him they followed, his death of weakness and shame, had it not been succeeded as he had foretold by his resurrection on the third day, would have undeceived them. The resurrection was the hinge on which their opinion of Jesus turned; and, had it not occurred, there was no motive for them to continue their adherence to his cause, but every reason for their abandonment of it. Yet, though their faith was weak and often vacillating before his death, shortly after it they appear among the people cognizant of the crucifixion, courageous, unhesitating and explicit in declaring their full reliance on the truth and power of the doctrine he had preached. And what was that doctrine but a system of the purest morals, the most religious obligations, the utmost self-denial and steadfastness under persecution in the hope of obtaining from a

just God a recompense of mercy, not in this world but in eternity? There have been many false religions, and each has had many devoted followers, but no instance has been seen where men lied for the sake of virtue; conspired to cheat that they might make others upright; and braved the vengeance of God, to teach the world his worship in the purest and most spiritual form: certainly none in which the devotees based their delusion on a palpable fact of which their senses were judges, yet which had never occurred.

Consider also the number of the witnesses. The prophets, from the fall downward until the baptism of Christ, had all of them foretold the humiliation and glory of Christ, some of them with great particularity as to time, place, and circumstances; John the Baptist, at the height of an unparalleled influence over the people, jeopardized it all by declaring that he was only the forerunner of Christ, in whose rising light his should wane like a star before the morning sun; our Lord himself, while presaging his own ignominy and death, promised his followers nothing for this life but tribulation, shame, and persecutions. All occurred as it had been foretold: then, after his death he was seen alive (for, if we admit the testimony at all, the particularity with which it is given precludes deception or mistake respecting his identity and life) by the eleven apostles, with Matthias, all of whose statements fully and minutely harmonize; by the pious women; and, at one time, by more than five hundred brethren assembled, the greater part of whom were alive, as Paul says, twenty-eight years after, and not one of whom ever denied the assertions of the apostles; but, on the contrary, all of them continued steadfast in their faith, despite of perse-

cution and obloquy. Now how can we believe that a conspiracy could be formed of so many persons of all ranks, stretching over twenty centuries, at least, for the purpose of deluding the world, contrary to its prejudices and habits, into the adoption of the purest, most beneficent system with which mankind has ever been blessed!

Consider, again, the circumstances in which the apostolical testimony was given: not in some remote, obscure place, but at Jerusalem, before the very multitude and within hearing of the very Sanhedrim, who had been promoters of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, as well as personal observers of the natural prodigies said to have accompanied his death and uprising; nor this long afterward, but at the close of fifty days. The apostle Peter at the Pentecost boldly appealed to the citizens of Jerusalem, and to the mixed multitudes of Jews and proselytes from Judea and other countries, who had been present all the time, for the truth of his assertions respecting the life and works of Jesus, his crucifixion, and the supernatural events accompanying it; and then plainly declared his resurrection and ascension. Surely, then, the more intelligent and influential Jews had the opportunity (and they did not lack the will), if it were possible, to disprove the story; yet so far from this, the very people who had clamored against Jesus and followed him with execrations, listen astounded, and thousands upon thousands of them embrace the gospel. The new church is founded close to the cross and tomb of its Master. There it lingered for several years, challenging investigation; and thence its adherents scattered themselves over the greater part of the then known world, disputing with erudite philosophers, attacking

hoary prejudices, denouncing popular idolatries adorned with magnificence and attractive through their sensuality, daring the anger of infuriated priests and absolute tyrannies: while they required, as the only method of reconciliation to God, that men learned and unlearned, freemen and slaves, kings and people of all nations and lands, should bow at the cross of an excommunicated Jew; yet with such success, that though, in the course of three centuries, three millions of them had been martyred and many more treated as infamous and deserving of all outrage, the little church, at first not six hundred strong, had become, even in what the world estimates as strength, mightier than the Roman empire itself, — absorbing within its bosom sects of philosophy, religious armies, aristocracies and populace, though never a sword had been unsheathed for its defence or progress, and its only weapon was the truth of the gospel, confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus.

And what motives could there have been for such a conspiracy? Why should the apostles with their attesting brethren, after having had proof of the imposture, if imposture it was, have united, contrary to all their avowed love of divine truth, to propagate the name of the deceiver? That priestcraft in all ages has been cunning, and bold with schemes to attain power and wealth and luxurious gratifications, history abundantly shows; that even Christianity, when in favor, has been prostituted and defiled for such purposes by its priests and hierarchs, that astute but unscrupulous rulers have used its forced alliance to strengthen thrones or erect dynasties, is most lamentably true; but where had the apostles such inducements? Forewarned by their master that they should suffer trial in every form, openly

foretelling their own persecutions and martyrdom, promising their disciples a no better lot than their own, they lived as they professed to live, for reward after death, in an eternity where, if they were conspirators, and blasphemers, and liars, as they must have been if Christ had not risen, they could have expected nothing short of utter damnation.

Now, to say nothing of other proofs, many of which might and should be adduced in a longer treatise, we may safely conclude, as sturdy Barron expresses it, "that this testimony is beyond exception; that no matter of fact ever had, or could well have, a more valid and certain proof: . . . so that to refuse it, is in effect to decline all proof by testimony, to renounce all certainty in human affairs, to remove all grounds of proceeding securely in any business or administration of justice, to impeach all history of fabulousness, to charge all mankind with insufficiency or extreme infidelity, and to thrust God away from bearing credible attestation in any case." Nay, my brethren, may it not be truly said that, to be sceptical of the great fact which we this day celebrate, requires a greater credulity than the most absurd superstition? At this very hour, all Christendom is exulting in honor of our risen Lord; earth ascends toward heaven, and heaven is stooping toward earth, that the church below and the church above may blend their anthems in one grand harmony of praise, to the Lamb that was slain for our offences and raised again for our justification.

Let us now follow the Catechism in ascertaining how we are profited by the resurrection of Christ.

The answer supplied us is:—

"First, by his resurrection, he hath overcome death, that he might make us partakers of that righteousness which he had purchased for us by his death; secondly, we are also by his power raised up to a new life; and, lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection."

We have here, to reduce the doctrine under brief heads, the assurance by the resurrection of Christ,

FIRST: *Of our justification.*

"He hath overcome death, that he might make us partakers of that righteousness which he had purchased for us by his death."

SECONDLY: *Of our sanctification.*

"We are also by his power raised up to a new life."

THIRDLY: *Of our final and full glorification.*

"The resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection."

FIRST: *The resurrection of Christ assures us of our justification.*

The divine method of justifying the sinner who believes in Jesus, through the imputation of the infinitely meritorious righteousness wrought for us by our divine Surety, incarnate as our elder brother, has been handled at large under several previous sections of the Catechism, and need not now be formally discussed. Let us, however, remember that, in his atoning work, Christ acted under a covenant which he had made as our representative head with the Father, as representing the godhead; and the conditions of the gracious covenant were, that, on his rendering a sufficient honor to the law which they had broken, the salvation of his people should be intrusted, with all power in heaven and earth, to his mediatorial hands. It was necessary,

therefore, not only that he should be divinely acknowledged as the appointed Mediator, which was done by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him at the beginning of his ministry, but that, when his atoning work was finished, its sufficiency and acceptance should be as divinely certified; and this was done by his being raised from the dead to the right hand of the Father. Thus the apostle, in that wonderful verse which is an epitome of the whole gospel: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto (until) death, even the death of the cross; wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." This exaltation was the exaltation, not of the Son of God merely, for he needed none, but of the Son of God *incarnate*, as a servant, in our room; and was the reward of his obedience wrought out all his life, even to his death on the cross. In other words, he had fulfilled his part of the covenant by rendering an infinitely sufficient righteousness; and the Father fulfilled his part by exalting the crucified Redeemer to infinite power, with "a name which is above every name, that, at the name of JESUS, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The fitness of such a recognition is apparent. The death passed upon the sinner by sentence of the law is

eternal death, because no amount of punishment that the sinner can endure can satisfy the law's offended honor: he can never pay the penal debt, and, therefore, must suffer on forever, because never relieved from condemnation. So, had Christ not risen after he died, there was no proof that the honor he had vicariously done the law was sufficient. To all seeming, his death, like ours, would have been eternal, and our representative, like ourselves, remained under the curse. But when he, from the infinite dignity which his divine nature gave to his human sacrifice, had honored the law by the obedience of his active life, and the expiation of his submissive death had rendered the law an infinite honor, he had utterly paid the penalty, disarmed the curse, and exhausted death. The avenger had no power over him; it was not possible that he should be longer holden of the pains of death; and, therefore, of his own right, purchased under the terms of the covenant, the Mediator arose, in manifestation that his saving work was accomplished and accepted. Thus the writer to the Hebrews declares that "the God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant;" that is, through the virtue of his own blood shed as the head of the church, under the agreement of the gracious covenant; and, in another place, the same writer declares that the Son of God was sanctified by the blood of the covenant (Heb. x. 29). The whole argument of the evangelical scriptures proceeds upon this. The victims, — goats, or sheep, or calves, slain upon the Levitical altar, were proved to be mere types, pointing to the true sacrifice, but in themselves insufficient to take away sin, not merely because

of their unworthy nature, but because, when slain, they never revived. Hence the necessity of fresh blood; the craving law was never satisfied, the penalty was not paid, the death substituted was not enough. Nothing short of his resurrection could show that the sacrifice of the substitute was accepted as sufficient. Thus the writer to the Hebrews: "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, . . . can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. . . . And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For, by one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." From the moment that he said on the cross: "It is finished!" the justification of his people was secured; even the lifeless body of the Surety passed from the hands of his enemies into those of his friends, having suffered no farther insult except the rude opening of that blessed fountain of blood and water which has filled for us the pool of healing; and he lay in the tomb only long enough to sweeten it for our rest: but the assurance, the divine acknowledgment, of the justifying merit, was not given till his resurrection. Then we see, by his victory of the grave, that the sting of death was plucked out, and that the law has no more strength to hold us, and bless with triumphant voices our Lord Jesus Christ. So the apostle in Romans: "Who shall

lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again." And in full sympathy with the divine word, we may exclaim, in the words of the seraphic Hall: "Oh, my dear Saviour, I bless thee for thy death, but I bless thee more for thy resurrection. That was a work of wonderful humility, of infinite mercy; this, a work of infinite power. In that, was human weakness; in this, divine omnipotence. In that, thou 'wast delivered for our offences;' in this, thou 'wast raised again for our justification.'"

But there was something more needed than the display of his acceptance with the Father; the salvation of his people, now purchased by his blood, was to be accomplished by his power. He was to ask and receive for them the grace of the Holy Ghost, and by that Spirit make them actually partakers of his righteousness. The smitten, feeble flock needed the care and guidance and championship of its great and good Shepherd; the powers of hell were to be crippled, and the powers of heaven and earth employed for the triumph of his church; the gates of hell were to be borne away, and the everlasting doors of heaven flung open for their exodus from the grave to immortality; the angelic armies were waiting for the Lord of their hosts, the Captain of our salvation, to lead and direct them in the service of his redeemed, and the Father expecting him on his throne, that, to his coequal divinity, the infinite rule of providence might be given. He could not be Lord of the living while he remained among the dead. None but the risen Lord could say to the sorrowful believer, Why weepest thou? and chase away his tears

by a word of love. None but the risen Lord could say to the doubting one, "Be not faithless, but believing," while he opens the scriptures concerning himself to the illuminated understanding. None but the risen Lord could say to his messengers, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "No! if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain;" "if Christ be not raised, then is our faith vain; we are yet in our sins;" "if for this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

SECONDLY: *The resurrection of Christ assures us of our sanctification.*

The union of the believer with Christ, his representative head, is vital and perpetual. "I am crucified with Christ," says the apostle, "nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." As by faith he dies in Christ's death on the cross, so by faith he lives a new life in Christ's life after death. As Christ's life after his resurrection was a heavenly life, so the life of the believer, who knows the power of Christ's resurrection, as well as the fellowship of his sufferings, is made conformable to Christ's death by dying unto sin, and aspiring to Christ's life in heaven. This is the generous and elevating argument, as the apostle gives it: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, who

are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nothing can be clearer than this expository logic. Sanctification follows necessarily upon justification through the atonement of Christ, as his resurrection followed his death. We have no part in the one, if we do not feel the power of the other.*

Besides, as we learn from several scriptures, the same Holy Spirit by whose power Christ was raised, quickens his people by grace. The gift of that Spirit without measure to Christ was promised him in the covenant: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." All grace comes from the

* See Ephesians i. 19-23; ii. 6, 7. The parallel is drawn between the raising up of Christ and the conversion of the sinner. Throughout the epistle, the power of God signifies the Holy Ghost.

Father, but only through Christ, and through Christ only by the operating energy of the Holy Ghost. Christ needs not the grace for himself, but receives the fulness of the Spirit, that of his fulness we all might receive, and grace for grace. Hence the apostle Peter, at the Pentecost, proves the ascension of Christ, and accounts for the miraculous effusion of spiritual influences by the same word. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." That Holy Spirit purchased for us by his merits, and obtained for us by his prayers, he continues to send down upon Christians as individuals, and as a church, and will until the consummation in glory. The grace of the Spirit is the sanctifying life of the church, sent from the head of the body through all his members; and "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is of this inner grace, as well as Christ's power over providence, that the apostle was thinking when he says: "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;" that is, his life after his resurrection. Salvation is completed only through sanctification; sanctification only by the grace of the Holy Ghost; and that grace is obtained for us only by him who ever liveth to make intercession for us. So the apostle Peter, speaking of our lively hope from the resurrec-

tion of Jesus, says that the heavenly inheritance is "reserved" for those "who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Notwithstanding all Christ's sufferings, we should despair of reaching heaven, were it not that he who died for us now lives for us, to make us more than conquerors over temptation without and corruption within. Thus it is that we are by his power raised up to a new life; and now, because Christ that died is risen again, and is now at the right hand of God, and also maketh intercession for us, we know that the author will be the finisher of our faith, and may well be persuaded that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Because he lives, we shall live also."

THIRDLY: *The resurrection of Christ assures us of our final and full glorification.*

The answer in the Catechism is confined to our resurrection, and the ascension of Christ is the subject of the next article, the discussion of which will involve our assurance of an entrance with him into glory. But, though theologians distinguish, and very properly, the several degrees of our Lord's exaltation, the Scriptures often speak of his resurrection and ascension together, as though his ascension began in his rising from the grave, and finished in his sitting at the right hand of the Father. So in Philippians: "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted him." "This Jesus hath God raised up," says the apostle at the Pentecost, "whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, . . . he hath shed forth this," manifestly from his throne; and in his first epistle he says that, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are

begotten to a lively hope of our heavenly inheritance. If a view we took of the matter in our study of the last Lord's Day be correct, our Lord ascended to his Father immediately after he arose, though for obvious reasons he returned at intervals to show himself to his disciples, and to make a formal, visible ascension at the end of forty days. Certainly, the apostle Paul teaches that there will be no such interval (as, indeed, there is no reason for it) between the rising of the saints, and their reception into glory: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." The change spoken of is into glory. So again: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain (that is, those Christians who shall be living at the time) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: so shall we be ever with the Lord." It is impossible, therefore, for us not to connect closely our glorification with our resurrection. The resurrection promised us is not a renewal of our animal life, nor a life to be spent upon earth, even in part, but an instant and full entrance to heaven, of which our Lord's ascension was both type and assurance.

He died and was buried, not as an individual man, but as the recognized head of his church; and, therefore, he arose not as an individual, but as the head of his church, in which capacity he also ascended to heaven and now reigns at the right hand of the Father. But if the head ascends, the body ascends with it. Thus I find that the Latin translators of the Catechism

insert the word "Head" here: "The resurrection of Christ *our Head* is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection." All who by faith die with him, shall, through the indissolubleness of their vital union to him, rise with him, that, as they have partaken of his shame, they may partake of his glory. The consummation of this privilege is for wise reasons delayed, but the resurrection of Christ is the assurance of its certainty. For as without the resurrection of Christ we should have no proof that he is the Saviour, so except we shall be raised we can have no salvation.

The soul of the believer could not at death enter heaven unless it was made certain that in due time his body should be raised also. For the soul of the man is not the man; neither is the body of a man, the man: the man is not perfect, the whole man is not saved, except he be saved soul and body. The curse of death fell upon man, both soul and body; the grace of eternal life through the second Adam is given to the believer, both soul and body. The Son of God, when he came to be incarnate as our Surety, took to himself a human body and soul, else would he not have been a man: so he suffered for us the pains of the curse in both his body and his soul; and so he rose as our Surety, having accomplished the atonement, both body and soul. So, also, because of his acknowledged satisfaction, shall we who believe in him be redeemed, body and soul, and raised to the blessedness where he is. Thus the apostle: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man (each) in his

own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." The argument is brief, but conclusive. Other questions on this doctrine will be discussed, when we come to the article on the resurrection of the body.

For the present let us rejoice that "this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption, incorruption." Our life is brief, so was our Lord's; it is full of sorrows, but his incomparably fuller; it is racked with pain, but never so exquisite and manifold as his; it is worse than grief and torture, it is polluted with sin, and there we are unlike him, the holy, harmless, and undefiled; it ends with agony and death and the grave, and to the close we may track his blood-stained footsteps. But this is not all of life: Christ has risen to a life eternal, heavenly, holy, and blest. So shall all his people live, where sin or sorrow or pain or death can reach them no more forever.

O beloved friends, shall all of us have part in that blessed resurrection? Have we all been crucified with Christ? Have we all been converted, are we all sanctified to newness of life? Have we all set our affections beyond and far above this world, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God? O let us see to it that we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise; for a new heart, and a Christian life here, is the only earnest of a glorious life hereafter.

O remember (God, for his Son's sake, make us all remember!) that there is also a resurrection unto damnation, and that all who are not Christ's in faith, certified by practice, pass through death and the grave into the second death, and hell, from which there is no return forever! It is a terrible alternative! Save us,

O heavenly Father! Save us, O Holy Spirit! Save us, O Jesus Christ! Standing beside the broken tomb of the crucified, and looking up through the rent vail to the throne of God and the Lamb, we pray, Save us from eternal death!

LECTURE XXI.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

EIGHTEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

"He ascended into heaven."

QUEST. XLVI. *How dost thou understand these words: "He ascended into heaven?"*

ANS. That Christ, in sight of his disciples, was taken up from earth into heaven; and that he continues there for our interest, until he come again to judge the quick and dead.

QUEST. XLVII. *Is not Christ then with us, even to the end of the world, as he hath promised?*

ANS. Christ is very man and very God; with respect to his human nature he is no more on earth, but with respect to his Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he is at no time absent from us.

QUEST. XLVIII. *But if his human nature is not present wherever his Godhead is, are not then these two natures in Christ separated from one another?*

ANS. Not at all; for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and omnipresent, it must necessarily follow that the same is not limited with the human nature he assumed, and yet remains personally united to it.

QUEST. XLIX. *Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension into heaven?*

ANS. First, that he is our advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven; secondly, that we have our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge that he, as the Head, will also take up to himself us, his members; thirdly, that he sends us his Spirit as an earnest by whose power we seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on earth.

ALTHOUGH Christ's satisfaction for his people was complete when on the cross he said, "It is finished!" and bowed his head and gave up the ghost, and although its completeness was certified by his resurrection, which showed that death had no power over him, there remained yet much to be accomplished by him for the full redemption of his church in glory; and since he

came from the bosom of his Father, it was necessary to the manifestation of his consummate acceptance as our mediatorial Head that he should, according to his own word, "ascend up where he was before." Hence the ascension of Christ into heaven is a most important and edifying article of our Christian belief. Indeed, except we rightly understand and personally apprehend the doctrine of this great fact, it is impossible to enjoy the best comforts of our holy religion, or to acquire the divine strength essential for our perseverance in a Christian life. May God help us in our pious study!

Our church, in the lesson of the Catechism to-day, supplies us with an excellent method of thought, which, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we shall endeavor to follow.

FIRST: *The fact of our Lord's ascension* (46th Ques. and Ans.), *with some explanations* (47th, 48th).

SECONDLY: *The advantage it is to us* (49th).

FIRST: *The fact of our Lord's ascension into heaven.*

The *testimony* recorded by the evangelical writers is abundantly sufficient for our faith.

The evangelist Mark declares (xvi. 19), that after Jesus "had spoken" unto his disciples, "he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." The evangelist Luke, in the last chapter of his Gospel, and the first of the Acts of the Apostles, gives a particular account of the event. He ascended in full view of the eleven, and, probably, of the pious women, his mother, and some of his believing kinsmen (Acts i. 13, 14). After a cloud had received him out of their sight, two angels appeared, declaring that he had been taken up into heaven (11th). Stephen, the protomartyr, at his death, (vii. 56,) and Paul at

his conversion, (ix. 1-17,) saw the Lord Jesus in heaven, as also did John in the apocalyptic vision (Rev. i. 13-18). The descent of the Holy Ghost at the Pentecost confirms it, when we compare the prophecy (Ps. lxxviii. 18): "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them;" with the apostle Peter's declaration (Acts ii. 33): "Therefore (Jesus) being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear;" and also that of the apostle Paul (Ephes. iv. 7, 8): "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (that is, the Spirit). Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

The *time* of our Lord's ascension was forty days after he had risen from the dead, he having been with his disciples repeatedly during that interval, for the purpose of proving to them his resurrection, teaching them more fully his doctrine, and giving them directions how they should serve him after his departure. Why this interval was forty days we are not told. Moses was the same time in the mount after he had brought down the moral law, which had the sentence of death, while receiving the typical law, which foreshadowed the kingdom of Christ (Ex. xxiv. 18). Elijah travelled forty days in the strength of the food brought him by the angel, until he reached Horeb, where he heard Jehovah in the still small voice, the type of the Holy Ghost (1 Kings xix. 5-12). Jesus himself fasted forty days between his unction and his triumph over the tempter;

and several other instances show that to have been a period often fixed by God, doubtless for wise reasons. But the most interesting parallel is the forty days from his birth to his presentation in the temple (compare Luke ii. 22, with Leviticus xii. 2, 4, 6). "So," as our Witsius observes, "on the fortieth day after his resurrection, which was a second nativity, he went to appear before his heavenly Father in the temple not made with hands." The time was long enough for the purposes to which he put it, but brought to a close the moment when the disciples showed a supposition that he was about establishing a temporal kingdom on earth: "Lord," said they, "wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" — and immediately after he had answered them, referring to the gift of the Spirit, while they beheld "he was taken up" (Acts i. 6-9). In the course of these forty days he appeared, as recorded by the evangelists, at least eight times, and the disciples had the most convincing proof of his having risen *bodily* from the grave.

The *place* from which he ascended was Bethany: not the village, as that was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and he would hardly have chosen a spot where there must have been many unbelieving spectators; but the district of Bethany, which lay on the near side of Mount Olivet, adjoining the district of Bethphage, and about a mile, or a Sabbath-day's journey, from Jerusalem (Acts i. 12; Luke xxiv. 50, 51; John xi. 18). "He led them out *as far as Bethany*;" that is, to the spot where the district began. The Mount of Olives, and the district of Bethany in particular, were dear to Jesus from many delightful associations; and, if we adopt the etymology which makes Bethany signify the

place of sorrow, there is an eloquent fitness in his ascension thence from our sorrowful earth to his heaven of joy.

He *actually* ascended. It was no vision; in the clear daylight, the disciples saw him parted from them, and going up through the atmosphere.

God the Father, by the efficient Spirit, took him up. It is probable that he was borne aloft by invisible angels, as by those ministering spirits God executes his works; yet we are right, also, in saying that he went up, or ascended, by his own power, — the power of his personal divinity, the power of the Holy Ghost within him, and the power which he had, by prerogative of his mediatorship, purchased by his accepted atonement.

He went up *body* as well as *spirit*. He carried his entire humanity up with him; the very humanity which had been born of the Virgin Mary, which had gone through the sorrows, duties, and temptations of our mortal life; which had been "crucified, dead, and buried." This we know from many scriptures, as (Heb. iv. 14) where it is said that *Jesus* (our Lord's name as the Son of Man), "our great High Priest," "has passed into the heavens." Again (x. 12): "This man (that is, this very same person), after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down at the right hand of God." Again (19, 20): "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new (freshly slain) and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh," etc. His recently slain yet living flesh is the way into the holiest (the presence of God), which he has consecrated for us, by which to pass through the vail. The same is taught by those pas-

sages which assert that the glorified body of the second Adam, our Redeemer, is the pattern and earnest of the glory that will invest the heavenly bodies of his saints (1 Cor. xv. 42-49; Phil. iii. 21).

He went up into *heaven*. Heaven is the place or state where God dwells in his highest, most resplendent glory. The Jews supposed that heaven was supernal, or beyond the earth's atmosphere, and the language of Scripture is in accordance with their opinion. Thus, from every part of the earth's surface, the way to heaven is upward. It is remarkable, also, that heaven, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, seems to have descended, meeting the Lord as he rose. "A cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts i. 9); not a dark cloud, that would have been inconsistent with the purport of the scene; but, probably, as the early church believed, a bright cloud, like the *Shekinah*, or that on Tabor, (Matt. xvii. 5,) or the light to which no man can approach, within whose brightness the king immortal dwells (1 Tim. vi. 16). We may compare this with Psalm xviii. 9: "He bowed the heavens also, and came down;" and many other scriptures which show that when God makes a special manifestation of his presence, he depresses heaven towards the earth, as now he met Jesus in the air.

Thus our incarnate Lord ascended into heaven, to his Father's immediate presence, for us; "higher than the heavens," "above all heavens," "through the heavens;" that is, to the very highest seat of the majesty on high; not only entering the glory, but himself glorified in it. As we read in a former part of the gospel (John vii. 39): "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and

he prayed before his passion: "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." To such a height of divine glory did Jesus carry our human nature with him.

The 47th and 48th questions and answers are intended to meet certain objections supposed to be made against the true doctrine of our Lord's person, and have reference to an opinion held by the Papists and some others, especially among the followers of Luther, that the Saviour's humanity may be omnipresent, as in the bread and wine of the sacrament, which they contend is transubstantiated to, or consubstantiated with, his body. These ubiquitarians (as they are called, from *ubique*, everywhere) cite in support of their notion the promise of our Lord to the church: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." How, say they, can Christ be with his people, if he be not personally everywhere? And since it is admitted on all hands that his divinity is omnipresent, how can his humanity be united to his divinity, if it be not omnipresent also? Or how, if this be not so, can Christ "fill all things," according to the testimony of the apostle Paul? To all this our church most conclusively answers by saying that our Lord, being both God and man, is, indeed, present with us in his divine nature, especially by his power, grace, and Holy Spirit; but that his human nature, being essentially limited, cannot be with us on earth while it is in heaven. Nor does this bring into doubt the unity of his person, since he assumed the human nature to his divinity; his humanity continuing finite, else it ceases to have a main

quality of humanity, the divinity continuing infinite, else it ceases to be divine. For when it is said that God dwells in the flesh, it must not be thought that the divine nature is circumscribed by the human, but that it manifests itself through the finite nature thus adjoined. The divinity is ever present with the humanity; but the humanity is not everywhere present with the divinity. Thus our Lord expressly said to his disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you." Christ did go away; his disciples saw his human nature ascend into heaven; and afterward at the Pentecost he did send, as since he has continued to send, his Holy Spirit from the right hand of the Father. Nay, on any other ground, what can be the meaning of those many texts which promise that Christ will come again to judge the world, and to receive his people to himself, that where he is they may be also?

SECONDLY: *The advantage to us of our Lord's ascension* (49th).

As we had occasion to say when treating of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, we must, as the Scripture teaches us, consider the resurrection complete in the ascension to glory. He came from heaven to accomplish the atonement in his death; therefore, his assumption from death to heaven proved that his vicarious righteousness was complete and accepted. Noting this point we pass to those of the Catechism, which are three.

1. Christ is our advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven.

This advocacy, or pleading on behalf of his people,

we are told by many scriptures, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, is a large part of Christ's office in heaven. The Jewish high priest, the accurate type of Christ, once a year, after he had offered on the altar the great sacrifice of atonement, also a direct type of the suffering Saviour, passed within the vail that excluded all but himself from the Holy of Holies; bearing with him some of the victim's blood, which he sprinkled on the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, that covered in the ark the law broken by sin; and, having thus presented the sign of atonement in the presence of Jehovah, he then and there made intercession for the people whom he represented. Let us also connect with this the memorable fact that, at the dedication of the first temple, the type of the true church, "fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD (that visible glory which symbolized the spiritual presence of Jehovah) filled the house," and so consecrated it as his own. Thus, when our great High Priest Jesus had completed his atonement for us, he carried with him into the highest, holiest heavens the immediate presence of God,—not merely his blood, for that was the sign of a dead sacrifice; but—his reanimated, immortal body which had been sacrificed on the cross, God rending the vail before him and leaving it rent, in token that all may draw nigh through him; and there, not like his sinful type pleading as a suppliant, but as the Son sitting at the right hand of his Father, claiming the covenanted prerogatives of his mediatorship, he asked, and, blessed be his name! ever liveth to ask the grace of the Holy Spirit to seal forgiveness and adoption on the hearts of his people as the divine assurance

that his ransomed church is accepted and consecrated of God for his sake. The typical sacrifice was offered repeatedly, because it was only a type; the typical high priest entered the Holy of Holies every year, because he was only a type; but our true Sacrifice, having offered himself once for all, rose from the dead because his atonement was infinitely sufficient; and our true High Priest having entered heaven to receive the blessings of his purchase, "forever sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Hence the effusion of the Holy Spirit — which had not before been given, or given only in preliminary drops, because Jesus was not yet glorified — upon the church at the Pentecost when Jesus was by the right hand of God exalted; and hence, because he continues in his glory, the grace from on high continues to descend, and will continue until his whole ransomed church is complete in glory like himself. Yes, dear Christians, the ascension of our faithful Lord, of which we have proof in the grace of the Holy Ghost, is to us a demonstration that we have an advocate on high, who will not forget those whom he is not ashamed to call his brethren, who will ask for us all that we need; and who can never ask, as our necessities can never require, more than his merits deserve or his almighty Father will delight to give. The vail is rent; and though our mortal eyes cannot pierce the invisible world, our faith sees Jesus, our head, on his peerless throne. Let us then exult with the apostle and say to each other, as he said to the Hebrew Christians: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and, having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." The weak prayers which, rising from our sinful hearts, a just God would not listen to, can reach the ear of our sympathizing brother; and he, combining with them his mediatorial right and divine eloquence, will make them infallibly prevalent. None can fail who plead through Christ.

2. "We have our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge that he as the head will also take up to himself us, his members."

Our Lord, as we have seen, actually ascended body and soul into heaven, and there he now lives, a perfect man, at the right hand of God. As truly as his blessed body was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose again, so truly is it at this moment in heaven. Hence we learn that there is no physical reason against our humanity being received into heaven and living there. It is true, as was shown in our last lesson, the life which Christ has had since his resurrection, differs from that which he had before his death, being derived not from birth of a woman, but from the immediate power of God; yet his human nature continued unchanged in any essential quality, and will continue the same forever. It was our nature he had on earth, it is our nature he has in heaven; where the man Christ Jesus lives we may live. He triumphantly entered heaven not for himself alone: as the eternal Son of God it was his by original right; but, as the head of his church, the kinsman, redeemer of his people, he took possession of their heavenly inheritance, "which hope," says the

apostle to the Hebrews, meaning the hope of heaven, "we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedec." The sublime elevation of Christ has not separated him from his people. He is still their head, and they his body. He still represents them as their champion, advocate, and king. "Where my flesh reigns, I reign," says Augustine. As in his death our shame was upon him, so in his majesty his glory will be upon us. "I go," said he to his disciples as the time approached when he should be received up, "to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The express purpose for which he ascended was to prepare places for us near his own, and his purpose would fail did he not take up to himself us, his members.

And here I cannot deny you, or myself, the pleasure of enjoying the eloquence of Witsius, whose soul burns with more than seraphic fire, while expatiating on this animating theme. "It was important to Christ, that he should possess the right which he had procured for himself, and that, having valiantly and successfully overthrown his enemies, he should be carried in a triumphal chariot, and amidst the shrieks of devils, and the acclamations of angels, amidst the amazement of the wicked, and the choruses of the faithful, make a glorious and joyful entry, not into a capitol like that of Rome, but into the heavenly Jerusalem, and the temple not made with hands, there to enjoy a delightful rest after the long travail of his soul. . . . There (also)

had he to set up his chair as a prophet, that he might instruct his people by his Spirit, who irradiates their minds from above. There he had to appear in the presence of God as a priest, . . . and as the high priest to enter within the vail and make intercession for the people. There he was to take possession of the throne of his kingdom, that he might hear the angels around the throne, shouting with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;' that, looking down from his lofty seat, he might laugh at the impotent rage of his enemies, and from that impregnable fortress afford the most effectual succor, and liberally bestow the richest gifts on his saints. . . . Nor can any one of them fail to regard with most lively interest an inauguration of their king so splendid, and a triumph of their champion so magnificent. What can be more delightful for them than to see their Lord, who, so lately overwhelmed with so many waves of unparalleled trouble and sorrow, even to the very abysses of hell, now shining in the fresh splendor of a spiritual body, exalted far above the stormy clouds and dreadful thunders; nay, above the sun himself, and the loftiest of the stars, made higher than all heavens, and taking possession of the throne as his father's equal, amidst the congratulations of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect! . . . 'God is gone up with a shout; Jehovah with a sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises to our king, sing praises. For God is the king of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding.'

3. "He sends us his Spirit as an earnest, by whose power we seek those things which are above, where

Christ sitteth on the right hand of (the Father) God, and not things on earth."

We have already anticipated much of this head, and seen how the sending of the Spirit was, and continues to be, the proof and assurance of Christ's having entered heaven as the head and forerunner of his people; for he had said: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Yes, dear brethren, none of us may know that we have the benefits of Christ's ascension, unless we have received his Spirit into our hearts, and are conscious of its sanctifying and elevating influences. As the apostle says: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." By faith we die with Christ in his crucifixion, we are quickened to a new life with Christ in his resurrection, and so we rise heavenward with Christ in his ascension. So again: "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Christ Jesus." Again: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is therefore essential to a spiritual following of Christ, a necessary sign of our fellowship with him, that we cherish not only an expectation, but an earnest, longing, increasing desire for heaven. The things of earth are a snare and a hurt, except as we use them to help us on our way heavenward; the duties of this life are not faithfully performed, except as we aim in them to fit ourselves through grace for

heaven; nay, the religious blessings we are permitted to enjoy here, fail of their end if they do not urge us onward to a full fruition in heaven. Our Christian life is a course through this world, which we are to run looking unto Jesus at the right hand of the throne of God. The mark of the prize of the high calling is in heaven. Nay, it is the hope of heaven which keeps our souls surely and steadfastly. No matter what other proofs of his being a Christian a man may think that he has, — what moral virtues, what present zeal, what reverence for God and sacred things, what kindness and faithfulness to his fellow-men, — if he have not this longing thirst for heaven, he should doubt his Christianity. The regenerate soul can be satisfied with nothing short of awaking with the divine likeness. We cannot pray aright without hoping for heaven, for there only will the askings of a pious heart be fully granted. We cannot give thanks aright without hoping for heaven, for there are the consummate blessings of the Redeemer's purchase. We cannot serve God aright without hoping for heaven, for there only is our faithfulness to be acknowledged, and our wages paid. Our hope should be submissive, and our longing patient; we should be willing to remain so long as God has work for us here, but ever with a yearning sense that to depart and be with Christ is far better. Grace in the heart is an ascensive power, ever lifting its desires upward and upward, and so above the temptations of time and earth. We can never drive this world out of our hearts, but by bringing heaven into them. And heaven meets our affections when they ascend, as it met Jesus; and he who so walks, climbing the arduous way from the valley of Baca to the temple on the

mount (for we must walk until we get our wings of angelic strength), will so approach the heavenly threshold, as, like holy Enoch, he can cross it at a step.

Oh, dear friends, what an advantage have they whose Jesus is in heaven, over those first disciples when they had him with them personally on earth. They were for building tabernacles on Tabor, looking for a temporal kingdom, walking by sight and not by faith; but our Lord now above draws up to a better, higher, holier home our aims, our desires, and our love. Have they who thus believe and hope, says an excellent father of our own church, "a double ensurance of heaven, since they have their nature there as a pledge, and the Holy Spirit in their souls as an earnest?"

LECTURE XXII.

CHRIST ON THE THRONE AS RULER AND JUDGE.

NINETEENTH LORD'S DAY.

CHRIST ON THE THRONE AS RULER
AND JUDGE.

QUEST. L. *Why is it added "and sitteth at the right hand of God?"*

ANS. Because Christ is ascended into heaven for this, and that he might there appear as head of his church by whom the Father governs all things.

QUEST. LI. *What profit is this glory of Christ, our head, unto us?*

ANS. First, that by his Holy Spirit he poureth out heavenly graces upon us as his members; and then that by his power he defends and preserves us against all enemies.

QUEST. LII. *What comfort is it to thee that Christ "shall come again to judge the quick and the dead?"*

ANS. That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the very same person who before offered himself for my sake to the tribunal of God, and hath removed all curse from me, to come as judge from heaven; who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall translate me with all his chosen ones to himself, into heavenly joys and glory.

THE assumption of Christ Jesus into heaven testified the divine approval of his work on earth, as his uprising from the dead demonstrated the sufficiency of his expiation. The only begotten Son of God had been sent from heaven into the world to provide a righteousness for our justification through faith; and when that end was fulfilled, he returned whence he came. But not as he came forth did he return to heaven. In order to accomplish his vicarious righteousness, he had assumed a human nature like our own, and made it one person with his adorable divinity. In that human nature he had humbled himself as a servant obedient until death, "despised and rejected of men," "stricken,

smitten of God and afflicted," oppressed to the lowest ignominy of torture by the malice of the world, to the deepest reproach and pains of hell both in body and soul on the tree of the cross by the justice of his Father; and all this that he might bear away our shame, magnify and honor the law which we had broke, expiate the guilt we had incurred, and lift up from the ruin sin had brought upon them, those whom he accepted as brethren when he became "the seed of the woman." Therefore, when his vicarious merit was complete, and the crucified had by a divine life "conquered death and him that had the power of death," "having obtained eternal redemption for us," he did not forsake the nature he had loved so well, but bore aloft through the rent skies the body and soul he had made his own by a union personal and indissoluble. He entered heaven as the only begotten Son of God, but also as the Son of man; coequal with the Father, yet our elder brother, the Emmanuel claiming his divine right, the mediator claiming his covenanted reward, the forerunner claiming the inheritance which as a Son was his own, and in which he had associated his people through the adoption they receive by his representation.

But the Scriptures declare that his being received into heaven was not enough; and when our faith looks up through the parted vail, we see that he

"Sitteth at the right hand of God." The Catechism, also, in the lesson for to-day very properly unites to this article of our creed that which asserts

"From thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead."

Both will, with divine permission, make the subject of our present study.

The Answer to the 50th Question gives the reason why it is added that Christ "sitteth at the right hand of God."

The 51st states the "profit which this glory of Christ, our head, is unto us."

The 52d declares the comfort we derive from the fact that Christ "shall come again to judge the quick and the dead."

We shall be able to cover all this ground, and with greater convenience, by considering the several topics under three heads:

FIRST: *The meaning of the phrase, "He . . sitteth at the right hand of God."*

SECONDLY: *The reason for this preëminent glory of Christ.*

THIRDLY: *The comfort which the believer derives from this doctrine of our Lord's exaltation.*

FIRST: *The meaning of the phrase, "He . . sitteth at the right hand of God."*

1. The assignment of a place on the right hand of a king denotes his confidence and satisfaction in the person so honored. Christ "sitteth on the right hand of God." The Scripture represents that it is God in his supreme dignity who thus honors Christ. The Son, "when he had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," says the writer to the Hebrews; and again: "Looking unto Jesus . . who . . . is set down at the right hand of the throne of God;" which fulfils the prophecy: "The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This implies a conferring of authority with the honor, as when a king elevates one as chief minister in the administration of his

empire. But other scriptures show that more is intended than a place *beside* the throne on its right hand. The Son sitteth *on the throne itself* with the Father: "Unto him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." So, also, we behold "the Lamb in the midst" "of the great white" "throne;" and the river of life issuing from "the throne of the Lord God almighty and the Lamb." This clearly signifies the association of Christ with the Father in the full exercise of all power over all things, as the Master says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

2. The vastness of the power thus exercised by the Son proves him to be truly and infinitely God, and therefore coequal to the Father; for what less than omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence were equal to the administration of universal empire? So we read: "Unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

3. Yet, while such dominion belongs unto the Son by right of his original divinity, the phrase "on the right hand" indicates that this eminent authority has been *delegated*. It is the Emmanuel, the Son of God incarnate, that sits on the throne, and we know that the human nature neither has by right, nor can of itself exercise such dominion. Hence we are told that, because Christ Jesus "being in the form of God took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient until death, even the death of the cross, . . . God also hath highly exalted him (the God-man) and given him a name that

is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The phrase "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty," signifies the elevation by God the Father, representing the Godhead, of Jesus Christ the Mediator, representing the church, to the glory and power of a universal kingdom, as we read: "That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

SECONDLY: *The reason for this preëminent glory of Jesus Christ.*

1. That the Father might manifest to all intelligent creatures his infinite appreciation of our Lord's mediatorial work.

The redemption of sinners was, as the Scriptures assure us, purposed and planned in a council of the ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each adorable person taking his peculiar part: The Father representing and vindicating the honor of the Godhead which had been treasonably provoked by our sins; the Son undertaking to magnify the broken law

and satisfy the justice of the law, whose sanctions were eternal life as the reward of righteousness alone, and eternal death as the sure penalty of disobedience; the Holy Ghost promising his efficient energies to make successful all the means employed in the economy of grace.

This redemption is the highest work of God, infinitely transcending all his other works of creation and providence, which for the same reason are made subservient and contributive to it. There God has his highest delight, and from its issues he looks for his chiefest praise. Hence it is styled emphatically "the good pleasure of his will;" and it is "to the praise of the glory of his grace." But while we adore with equal thanks the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for their most merciful offices in our redemption, it is obvious that the office of the Father and the office of the Holy Ghost necessarily demand a perfect discharge of the office committed to the Son. His vicarious righteousness is the basis of the Father's choice and the Spirit's efficiency; for the Father sends the Son to work out the atonement, and the Holy Ghost applies the atonement to the salvation of the church. The Father "predestinates us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," and the Holy Ghost makes us "accepted in the beloved." Now, as we have seen, the Son having become incarnate had fulfilled all righteousness, made an infinitely sufficient basis for our atonement (or reconciliation) with God, and so justified the mercy of God in the salvation of the sinner who believes on Jesus, when he finished his sacrifice on the cross. Therefore was Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, in whom he was well pleased, — not simply as his only begotten Son, —

there needed no work of righteousness to recommend his coequal Son, — but his only begotten Son, the incarnate mediator who had perfected the work of propitiation. The only begotten had taken on him the form of a servant, in our nature representing us; and in him, as a servant representing us, is he well pleased. The Father rejoices over him as the magnifier of the divine law, the satisfier of the divine justice, the justifier of the divine mercy; and receives him back to heaven as the head of a once prodigal race that was dead but is alive again, that was lost and is found. With what glory shall he invest this well-beloved Son less than the robe of his best majesty! What place shall he assign him in whom he is so well pleased, less than a seat on his own throne! What reward shall he bestow on the Propitiator for such perfect righteousness, less than the administration of all power in heaven and in earth!

The incarnate Son, in the execution of this work, had stooped to extreme shame. He had been degraded by poverty, persecution, and contempt, even to the once infamous cross; his enemies had exulted over him as he lay in the guarded tomb to all semblance under the grasp of "him that had the power of death;" men and angels had seen that it even pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief; nay, had heard his cry of anguish and desolation come from the thick darkness, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me!" And now must the Father show by a glory infinitely greater than the ignominy, how much he delights in his faithful servant; so he raises him from the lowest parts of the earth, where he was stript of all things, to the highest seat in heaven, that he may fill all things.

Therefore the glory of Christ is to be measured only by the infinite riches of the glory of his grace; and such the manifestation of the Father to the man whom he delighteth to honor, that not only the church shall ascribe unto him glory and dominion forever and ever, "but every creature which is in heaven, and on earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," shall say, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

2. "That he might," says the Catechism, "there appear as the head of his church, by whom the Father governs all things."

Let us, for greater convenience, divide this sentence.

a. "That he might there appear as the head of his church."

The first Adam was driven, because of his sin, by avenging angels, from the presence of God in the first paradise, and all his descendants fallen with him are by nature and personal guilt in the same state of condemnation and consequent exclusion from the divine favor. Christ, as the second Adam, had undertaken to restore, by his representative righteousness, all sinners who believe on his name to the privilege and blessedness they had lost. As Adam was the head of his race, so does Christ act as the head of his church, which Isaiah calls "his seed," "the travail of his soul." But as the vicarious merit of the mediator is infinitely greater than the most perfect obedience of man could have been, the privilege and blessedness purchased by him must incomparably transcend what had been lost. Hence, the state of the church in the divine favor cannot now

be adequately shown on earth; and the second paradise is opened amidst the glories of the divine presence in heaven. Christ, therefore, having risen from the dead after the consummation of his atonement, remains on earth no longer than was required to confirm the fact of his resurrection, but ascends with his human body and soul to take possession of heaven as his by mediatorial right. He enters heaven not for himself alone, but for us as the forerunner of his church. When his pierced feet crossed the threshold of that holy place, he demonstrated that all who believe on his name shall follow in his majestic steps, and that the whole nature, body and soul of every Christian, shall partake of the same glory with which his humanity is now invested. There in the second paradise, where the tree of life offers its perpetual fruits, beside the river of the waters of life, which flows from out the throne of the Lord God almighty and the Lamb, shall Jesus, our surety, forever enjoy the reward for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, as he beholds all his ransomed people safe, sinless, and happy like himself.

Nor was it enough for this that he should merely enter heaven. The angels enjoy heaven as the concomitant reward of their unswerving fidelity;—the divinely incarnate Son who had not only accomplished an infinite merit for his people, but also, in so doing, fulfilled the highest good pleasure of the Father, must have a recompense far above the angel's honor. The only begotten Son must have his divine place on his Father's throne, and he takes his seat with his inseparable humanity about him, the Immanuel in whom the Father is well pleased. The ransomed sinners, in all

their multitudinous numbers, will enjoy heaven as the reward of his imputed righteousness, but he is the head of the body of which they all are members, and it is his right by which they are there; therefore must it appear that his dignity is infinitely preëminent; nay, that he is Lord of heaven, to open its gates and its treasures as his own for all his people. He reigns for us, because he reigns in our flesh. There to Christ on his throne do our affections follow him, for there "all the articles of our faith lead us."

b. "That he might there appear as the head of his church, *by whom the Father governs all things.*"

Though the merit on which the salvation of the church was finished by Jesus Christ when he died upon the cross, his work as our Redeemer will not be accomplished until his whole church — every one of his ransomed people — is brought home to the glorious house of his Father. For wise reasons, (elsewhere treated of,) this process is gradual; gradual in each believer, and gradual in the church. There is a severe discipline through which the grace of God is manifested by the experience of Christians and the church on earth, and by which they are to be prepared for the holy consummation of heaven. They are to labor in services like his, for which their strength is utterly insufficient; they are to meet difficulties and oppositions and delusions far greater than their own power and skill to overcome. All the malice of the world and hell is against them. Yet must they overcome. Humanity must achieve its own triumphs. All things were put under man at the beginning, and all things must be again put under him in the end. The restoration else were not complete. Now we see not all things put under the church. Her

battle is fierce and obstinate. "But we see JESUS, our second Adam, at the right hand of God the Father," crowned with glory and honor. God has put all things into his hands, the hands of the man Christ Jesus. All power is given unto him in heaven and earth, not as the Son of God, — that power has been eternally his by right of his original divinity, — but to the Son of God incarnate, Jesus Christ as the head of his church, and for the benefit of his church. Nothing less than his infinite divinity were sufficient to exert this universal power, but he exerts it through his humanity as the grand type of regenerated, glorified man. He reigns as the second Adam by the power of his godhead. All providence, therefore, is his; all things, all beings created, all events, all the laws of nature, all the affairs of nations, all the arts and sciences, inventions and enterprises of men are so ruled, directed, and overruled by him as to assist his people individually, and as a church in their struggles onward and open the way for their final triumph. "The angels" who constitute the hosts of which he is Lord, are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" even the devils, also, are subject unto him, their malice being restrained and their ultimate defeat made certain, for "he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." So that the apostle made no vain boast when he said, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God," and that all things are theirs, because they are "Christ's, and Christ is God's." The fulness of the church which is his body, is the fulness of Christ's glory, so hath the Father put all things under his feet and given him to be head over all things to his church that he

may see of the travail of his soul and be fully satisfied.

3. That he "may by his Holy Spirit pour out heavenly graces on us his members."

In the plan of redemption the Holy Ghost assumes the office of rendering effectual the work of Christ, and hence is said to proceed from the Father and the Son, as the Son from the Father. When, therefore, the mediator had finished his meritorious work, he took his seat at the right hand of the Father, and asked and received the promised agency of the Holy Ghost for the carrying out of his redemption to its entire completion. Hence the Holy Ghost is said to be the Spirit of Christ, and he is said to send the Spirit from the Father (John xv. 26). So at the Pentecost the descent of the Holy Ghost proved the session of Christ on his throne: "Therefore," said the apostle Peter, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (*i. e.* the promised Holy Ghost), he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." All the gifts of God through Christ to men, all the graces which characterize believers, — knowledge, strength, holiness, faith, hope, love, — with all their attendant train of blessed dispositions, are the effects of the Holy Spirit dwelling and working in them. To obtain this spirit in his various energies is the object of Christ's priestly intercessions. Whatever we need for our Christian comfort, guidance, and courage, can come to us only by the Holy Spirit; as all that was necessary to consecrate and sustain the humanity of Christ himself, came from the Holy Ghost sent down by the Father upon him. The Spirit was the holy oil

of his unction when he was crowned as the royal high priest and prophet of the church, and its precious perfumes flow down to the humblest member of his mystical body. Christ, therefore, sitteth at the right hand of the Father on his throne, that as he administers all providence for the external benefit of his church, he may also send each member of it all grace for the internal Christian life; or, as the 51st Question and Answer has it, the profit which this glory of Christ, our head, is unto us, may be stated in two parts. "First: That by his Holy Spirit he poureth out heavenly graces upon us his members; and then that by his power he defends and preserves us against all enemies."

4. There is yet another form of Christ's glory connected with his elevation as Lord of all, which, though stated in a separate article of the creed, the Catechism most properly unites with the consideration of his sitting at the right hand of the Father: his coming "to judge the quick and the dead."

Throughout the Scriptures, the final and general judgment of the world is ascribed to Christ, "because," says the apostle on the Areopagus, God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he raised him from the dead." Here not only is the judge declared to be the Son of God incarnate, by the emphatic term man, but his judgeship is intimately connected with his office as mediator by the assurance of his appointment being given in his resurrection from the dead. We see, also, according to the creed, that he proceeds from his throne to execute the office:

"From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead;" not that he leaves his sovereign authority behind him, but that he derives his authority to judge from his royal dignity. In a word, it is a prerogative of his mediatorial headship over all. The reason of this is twofold: first, from the relation of the mediator to God; secondly, from his relation to the church.

a. In committing to Jesus Christ the administration of mercy, the Father necessarily committed to him the administration of justice. It became him to reconcile mercy to the believer with justice to the impenitent; and, while he effected through his righteousness the redemption of his people, though sinners, to carry out the condemnation of all who rejected his suretyship. He could not, therefore, fulfil the trust of all authority from the Father until he had not only opened heaven for the penitent, but also sent away the obstinately impenitent to their merited doom. The gospel did not annul the law, but placed the law with the gospel in the hands of the mediator. Hence, as the final judgment is intended for the manifestation of the divine holiness in the consummation of the present system, so it should be presided over by the mediatorial Lord.

It is also for the benefit of the church, that its mediatorial head should be the judge to dissipate their fear, fulfil his gracious promises to them, and forever deliver them from all danger and dread of their enemies, by a complete and everlasting overthrow of all wickedness.

Thus the disciple, in the answer to the 52d Question, declares his unspeakable comfort from the judgeship of

Christ: "That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the very same person, who before offered himself for my sake to the tribunal of God, and hath removed all curse from me to come as judge from heaven; who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall translate me with all his chosen ones to himself into heavenly joys and glory." Even in this majestic splendor of the mediator, the believer is associated with the glory of his elder brother. It is in his kindred flesh that the Son of God shall sit on the judgment-seat; it is his head that shall display consummate power over the destinies of all men.

There are many very interesting questions and edifying truths beyond what we have touched upon connected with this subject; but as the Catechism does not bring them under the present lesson, and much larger space were necessary for their discussion than we have now at our disposal, we must leave them for other occasions, and proceed to consider

THIRDLY: *The comfort which the believer derives from this doctrine of our Lord's exaltation.*

This has been made to appear as we went through the previous discussion, but the several points may be profitably recapitulated.

1. Our right through grace to heaven is secured.

"Lord, it is good for us to be here," said Peter on the mount of transfiguration, when he beheld the glory of Jesus, and in his bewildered ignorance he would have continued on the top of Tabor; but just before his passion, when the master had gathered the twelve around him for the last time, he declared, "It is expedient for you that I go away." From the scene of his

transfiguration he descended to pass through sorrow, shame, and death to his Father's presence; and after he had ascended out of sight of his exulting disciples at Bethany, they had to pass through trials like his to reach their crown. But it was "the joy set before him," which animated him to "endure the cross, despising the shame;" it was the reward he had promised them which nerved their spirits to be faithful until death. He was no longer with them on earth; but they knew that he was in glory at the right hand of the Father. They no longer heard his gentle voice or saw his affectionate smile, but they knew that he had not forgotten them, for he had carried up with him his human body, and was still their elder brother and high priest, who could be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, having been tempted like as they were, though without sin; they had seen him condemned, crucified, dead, and buried; and now they were exposed, a scattered feeble flock, to the malice of the same enemies and a cruel death; but they knew that he whom they trusted was Lord of heaven, triumphant over all, and had taken his royal seat as their forerunner. There the man Christ Jesus, body and soul, was in glory, — a glory of which he had promised them that they should be partakers. Therefore, sinners though they were, partakers of flesh and blood, unworthy in themselves, and weak as they were unworthy, they knew that heaven was theirs; that they should enter heaven body and soul; that none could debar them entrance, because he, who had washed them from their sins in his own blood, and imputed to them his righteousness, and acknowledged them as members of his body, was now the king who had control over all the

mansions of his Father's house, and had promised to come again and receive them unto himself, that where he is they should be also. They could have no doubt of his faithfulness, they could have no doubt of his power; for he had been faithful unto death, and was now head over all things to his church. Thus we find that an assured hope of heaven was the great stay and comfort of the apostles and of the primitive Christians. They set their hearts on heaven, and nothing short of heaven could at all satisfy their longing expectations. Doubt of their ultimate blessedness there, the possibility of their being disappointed, would have been to them the power of keenest torture: "If for this life only we have hope in Christ," said the apostle Paul, "we are of all men most miserable." Their hope was in Christ for the life to come. The same comfort is ours, beloved brethren. Our Saviour is in heaven; he is Lord of heaven — Lord of heaven in our nature; and in receiving him and crowning him, the Father has given an earnest of receiving us and crowning us, if we be indeed Christians. It was to gain heaven for us that our Lord Jesus suffered and endured; to reach heaven and be with him there, should be, as it is, the great aim of all his true followers, and our only comfort; but our unspeakable comfort is, that, whatever meets us here, heaven will be ours at last, because Christ has made it ours now. Let, then, our conversation be in heaven, our fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and the holy angels. We are pilgrims now, but we are going home, and that home is heaven.

2. Our strength for the Christian life is secured.

Though the end of his pilgrimage be secured in

heaven, the Christian knows that great trials may, if his time on earth be prolonged, lie between his present state and heaven; nor can he help but fear, lest a promise being left him of entering into rest, he might seem to come short of it. He would not deliberately wander from his master's footsteps, nor yield to temptation; but he is feeble, his heart most wicked and deceitful, his knowledge little, and his judgment weak. How shall he restrain that wicked heart of his? How undeceive himself from its sophisms? How resist its long-indulged tendencies to draw back from the living God? Were he left to himself he would despair; but he is not. His master is not beyond his reach; there is a door open by which his faith can reach him still; and in faith he goes through the rent veil even to the throne of grace, and on that throne he sees Jesus, his intercessor, beside God the Father almighty, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost for all the members of his blessed body. As the Father honors the Son by receiving him as head of the church, so the Holy Ghost honors him by putting all his energies at his disposal for the church. The Holy Ghost enters the soul of each believer as the earnest of eternal life, shedding the light of truth through his understanding, the love of God through his heart, power from on high through his will. In a word, all that the believer needs within for his Christian life is assured to him, because he knows that Christ sits on his throne to "pour out by his Holy Spirit heavenly graces upon us his members." We may not, therefore, whatever be our conviction of our own sin and insufficiency, doubt of strength from Christ, so long as we have continual access to the throne of God and the Lamb. We have but to

ask, and we receive, and receive in no small measure, grace to help in time of need, grace to cover all our infirmities, to supply all our wants, to transform us from all that we are by nature to the likeness of the second Adam, the perfection of humanity and the heavenly type of his ransomed seed.

3. As our strength within is secured, so is our defence from without.

Our Head, by his victory over death and him that had power of death, triumphed over all his and our enemies; nay, by right of the covenant, has power over all created instrumentalities as head of the church for the church. It is, therefore, no more a question whether or not we are able individually, or as a church, to contend against the forces adverse to our cause, or to advance towards an ultimate success the kingdom of which we have been made partakers; that has long since been settled. We are nothing, the whole church apart from its head is nothing, in comparison with the world and the devil. Now we ask with uplifted heads, is not Christ able? Has he not, whose is all power in heaven and in earth, who sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, the force as he has the prerogative to overcome for us, and by us, that we may overcome with him? O believer, when by reason of difficulties around you and threatenings before you, your heart fails, look up! Look up to Jesus, where he sitteth at the right hand of God, whither all the articles of your faith lead you. Only set your affections on him; only cast your care on his almighty arm, and you shall be certain of deliverance and of success.

4. Our vindication is secure.

Our Lord left his disciples on earth to take his seat on his throne. Personally absent he is now, though present by his Spirit. But the separation will not be perpetual. We show forth in the holy sacrament of the supper his death; but we show it till he come. When the disciples stood gazing up at the heavens through which their Lord disappeared in glory, angels were sent to stand by them, and say, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;" and he himself had said before, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." So says the article of our creed: "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." For wise reasons he will permit his church to be tried, assisting them by his Spirit and his power, but withholding from them a full success. They will be accused, mocked, baffled, and persecuted. Yet only for a time. He sits on his throne expecting till his "enemies be made his footstool;" and we, though on earth, have a gracious privilege of sharing in the expectation; for when he comes again, it shall be to judge the quick and the dead. The Lamb that was slain shall sit on the judgment-seat, to justify the believer from the curse by his own righteousness; to condemn the unbeliever because his mercy has been rejected; to open with his nail-pierced hands the kingdom of glory for his friends; to banish, by the fierceness of his own wrath, his enemies to an everlasting doom. Before assembled angels and an observant universe will he

acknowledge and glorify the most despised of his little ones, while he pours eternal contempt upon the proud who resisted his love.

O Christian, O unbeliever, consider who can stand before him in the judgment! If we trust in ourselves, our condemnation is sure; if we trust in him, our vindication shall be complete.

END OF VOL. I.

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EXPOSITORY LECTURES

ON THE

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

BY

GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LECTURE XXIII.

THE JUDGMENT BY CHRIST.

NINETEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE JUDGMENT BY CHRIST.

He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained. — *Acts xvii. 31.*

THE works of nature demonstrate the truth of the revelation, that "God created the heavens and the earth." No power less than infinite, no skill less than all-wise, could produce from nothing, or maintain in its order, so vast, so varied, so harmonious a system. But when we search in the events of human life for evidences of God's moral government, the discovery is partial and even doubtful. Virtue is praised. There are systems and teachers of ethics. Religion is a sacred name. There is no land without temples, no nation without worshippers. Yet there are few who are notable for virtue, none who are perfect. Religion fails to preserve the sanctity of truth, purity, and love. We cannot mistake the fact that men are governed by men more than by God. Their supposed interests, or at the best their natural affections, ramifying self, through family, friends, and humanity, decide for the most part the right and the wrong of every action. What confusion is the result? The rich trample on the poor. The poor conspire against the rich. The just man is persecuted because he is just. The vile, when successful, are flattered in their success. The calumniator stands erect upon the ashes of his victim. The tyrant grasps at other sceptres, and the blood-drenched earth quakes beneath artillery more destructive than heaven's

thunders Vice does often prove its own punishment! There are physical reasons why incautious excess should produce wretchedness, disease, and death. But does virtue escape? It may be imperfect virtue, but has it immunity so far as it is virtue? Is vice punished so far as it is vice? Are rewards and punishments so equally distributed as to show beyond a question that there is a power over all exact in justice? We must go beyond this life and this world for the satisfaction of our anxious reason, and faith must be our guide. God alone can vindicate his ways to man. He has done so. The ages of heathen ignorance and dim Judaism have for us passed away. The voice of God calls aloud to our souls by the revelation of his son. "Repent, ye children of men. No longer dream of security in your sins, nor think because no fire at once descends to consume the wicked, that sin shall go unpunished. Though men may boast themselves without the fear of God, because one day is like another, and all things continue as they were; though the hearts of the children of men are more fully set to do evil, because of long impunity, know this, that I, the Lord your God, your Creator and your Governor, am your Judge. I have appointed a day in the which to judge the world in righteousness by that man whom I have ordained."

My friends, careless and full of life and worldly hopes as we may be, every one of us must stand before the judgment-seat of God. We do not believe this. It cannot be that we realize it. If we did, this great thought would control our hearts, and press upon our minds, and rule our lives. But we forget it. The tremendous future is shut out from our view by the temp-

tations of the present. O that God would by our holy text this day compel us to believe and tremble, that so we may come to believe and hope!

We have before us,

The fact, the method, the person.

FIRST: *The fact.*

He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world.

SECONDLY: *The method.*

He will judge the world in righteousness.

THIRDLY: *The person.*

By that man whom he hath ordained.

FIRST: *The fact.*

He will *judge*. Judgment signifies investigation of the conduct of a moral being, and the passing sentence upon him of reward or punishment, according to his merit or demerit.

God alone is judge. He only has authority. None can judge him, for he is supreme, and his will is the law, and all other beings are his creatures, and therefore his subjects. He does sometimes delegate his authority, as to parents or magistrates, but the judgment in his sight is void if it be not according to his law. He, therefore, is really the judge. It is, then, a most blasphemous thing to quarrel with God's doings, or to doubt the justice of his most holy law and righteous sentences. It is a most presumptuous thing to sit in harsh judgment upon our fellow-men, our fellow-subjects and sinners; for God has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

God only is able to judge. None but he can discern the inner motives of the moral creature, and know his true character. None but he can discern the conse-

quences of any moral act, or estimate its true goodness or evil. None but he can bestow reward, or execute wrath, after the decision is made. It is, then, a most silly and rebellious thing in us to try ourselves otherwise than by the divine will, or to form our conduct otherwise than by the divine rule. Rather let us ask him to search us and try us, and see if there be any evil way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.

God will judge his creatures.

Judgment is an attribute of sovereignty. There would be no divine government, and the divine laws would be inoperative and void, if God were not to reward his obedient, and punish his disobedient subjects. The Epicureans were justly considered no better than atheists for teaching that the divinity had no regard to the conduct of men; and those in our time are as bad who strive to think that they may sin without God's taking note or vengeance. It is essential to his justice. For, as he is the Creator, so he is the teacher and pattern for all his intelligent creatures, whose only excellence is in being like him. But, if he never visits iniquity with wrath, or righteousness with favor, if the inequalities of this life are never to be compensated in another, his creatures cannot know from him which is the right or which the wrong. They can have no motive to do well, no determent from doing ill. Nay, his very nature is such that he is a consuming fire to all that is evil, and the light of joy and peace to all that is good. So that they who deny a judgment, destroy all morals, and would abandon the world to a fearful and most destructive confusion of chance.

God will judge *the world*. By "the world," we must understand men, as the only moral agents in it. Each man has a particular judgment when he passes into the eternal world by death. For then the spirit returns unto God who gave it, and cannot fail to meet his favor or condemnation. Thus, in the parable, we see Lazarus enjoying his reward in Abraham's bosom, but the rich man lifting up his eyes, being in torments. The penitent thief was promised immediate admission into Paradise. Paul desired to depart and to be with Christ. And Peter tells us that the spirits of the old world who despised the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah, are in prison. This should make us very solemn and pious in our preparation for death, for at any moment death may come and usher us before God, after which no repentance can avail for our deliverance from the wrath of God, which burns unto the lowest hell.

But this judgment is not the great judgment of which the apostle speaks. Nor will all the penalties of sin, nor all the rewards of righteousness, be dispensed until both soul and body shall receive them after the resurrection. Nor will the justice of God be manifested unto all men, except all men be present as witnesses of the judgment of all men. He will judge the world.

The whole world shall be judged. Not one shall escape. Before him shall be gathered all nations. "Every one of us must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." The rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the learned and the unlearned, the pious and the unbelieving. God will send forth his holy angels to compel every soul before him. His piercing eye shall

detect every hiding fugitive. His flames shall burn the terror-stricken, wretched souls that would cover themselves under rocks and mountains.

Yet the individuality of each sinner will not be lost in the vast multitude. Each will be as distinct, and know himself to be as distinct in the eye of the Judge, as though he stood alone and there were no sinner but he. The inquiry will be into all the actions of each, — his thoughts, his words, his deeds. For every evil thought and every idle word (Oh what a scrutiny!) will he bring each of us into judgment. Each man shall receive the reward of his own works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. As we have been instrumental in leading others to sin or to righteousness, we shall share in their punishment or reward. But otherwise, no one will suffer for his neighbor, or can thrust his neighbor into his room. Our sins are our own acts; we must bear them ourselves, unless by faith we have covered ourselves with the righteousness of Christ.

In the sight of the whole world we shall be judged. God will bring every man's work into judgment. The evil thoughts of lust, dishonest longings, or envious meanness, which we had hidden in our hearts from our closest friends, will then be apparent. Our secret sins, at the detection of which we would now burn with shame, before the eyes of the good, the eyes of our evil companions, all will appear without cunning, palliation, or excuse. Each one's conscience will then be fearfully awake. We shall feel intensely our own shame. We shall see each one the shame of the rest. The sinner will condemn himself. All sinners will condemn him. There will be no more a false public

opinion; no more conspiracies of hand joining in hand to make the wrong appear the right; no more standing by friends to cover up iniquities. The whole world, condemned themselves, will condemn each sinner of the whole world. Oh what infamy for the sinner! oh what illustrious fame for the good!

God hath *appointed a day* in the which he will judge the world.

His vengeance, though it delay, does not sleep. The day is fixed. His determination is made. He is now recording our every act, and word, and thought, against that day. So that even now our account is making up, our judgment is preparing. The day is fixed. It will come, and come in all its terrible truth. When that day shall come, no man knoweth. They profane the scriptures who dare to pronounce it. But the same scriptures teach that it will be at the end of the world. Not at the end of this dispensation, as some interpret the word. That is not the usual meaning of the word *world* in Scripture; and we have no right to change a meaning the Holy Ghost has given, when the Holy Ghost does not change it. The judgment must be after the final resurrection, for all the dead will be there. It is to be followed immediately by the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the eternal life of the righteous. It shall be when Christ comes in great glory, and all his holy angels with him, and he shall sit upon the throne of his glory. It shall be at the consummation of the things of this world, or else the design of the judgment in vindicating all God's ways to man will not be met. Ah, my friends, whether that day be remote or near, the day of our death is near, and after death there can be no preparation made

to meet it. Would that the time, wasted in curious questions about times and seasons, were spent in holy walking with God, and preaching and telling the story of Christ crucified.

SECONDLY: *The method of the judgment.*

He will judge the world in righteousness.

In righteousness. Not in arbitrary severity. God will be angry with the wicked in that day. But the anger of God is not like the wrath of man, unjust and cruel. The wicked are his enemies, but he will, even in judging his enemies, lay "judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." He will try them fairly, and only by the law he has given them, and the eternal principles of right from which that law proceeded. Their own conscience, the conscience of all moral beings, shall confess him to be just.

Nor will he judge partially or leniently. He has declared that he will by no means clear the guilty; that every man shall receive the reward of his deeds; that the wages of sin is death; and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. That there will be degrees of wickedness in the persons judged, one cannot question; and, consequently, there will be degrees of punishment; but the judgment will be rigid, no weak sympathy for the criminal will melt the judge to pardon or reduce the penalty. Stern, unbending, perfect righteousness will determine all.

But will there be no mercy? Yes; but mercy through righteousness. God will be as faithful to his promises as to his law. He has promised pardon to Christ for all his people, because Christ for them hath fulfilled the law and made it honorable; carried their sorrows, and borne their sins upon the tree. There

was mercy in the provision of the atoning righteousness of the Son of God. There will be justice in acquitting for the sake of that righteousness all who, according to the promise, have trusted in Christ as their surety, their advocate, and redeemer. Thus, even while the sinner saved through Christ enters into eternal life, the justice of God will burn the more brightly, because he pardoned not without a ransom. Vain, therefore, are all the sinner's hopes of escape from the mere goodness or the mere justice of God. Goodness cannot save him. Justice will not let him escape. There is no safety from the righteousness of God, but under the covering wings of a Saviour's righteousness.

THIRDLY: *The person of the judge.*

That man whom he hath ordained.

This we know from other scriptures is Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the man ordained mediator in all God's dealings with fallen man; ordained as the Saviour; ordained as the advocate; ordained as the king; ordained as the judge.

He is called that man, not because he is merely man, for he is also God, equal with God. For, indeed, who that is not God could bear the tremendous majesty that shall cover the judgment-throne? Who that is not God can exert the omniscient scrutiny essential to that judgment of righteousness? Who that is not God (for if not God, he must be a creature and a servant) can judge the servants of the Most High? But he is called "*that man*," because, for reasons we shall soon discover, it is Christ, God incarnate as the mediator, who shall execute the judgment of that great day.

Christ is the eternal Word; the Word that was God, and that was made flesh and dwelt among us, his glory

being that of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It is the office of the eternal Word to manifest the godhead. By him the worlds were made. By him all providence is administered, and by him the world will be judged.

But it is the Word incarnate by whom God will judge the world. This is because

Christ undertook in the covenant of redemption the full vindication of the law. Because of the intercession of Christ the judgment has been suspended. It is, therefore, due to eternal justice, and to the honor of the law, that Christ should adjudge the full penalty of that law upon all who, notwithstanding his atonement, have refused to repent and believe, that they might be saved through the righteousness of God in Christ. It is meet that the world should see that Christ is not the minister of sin, but that even he who opened the way of righteous mercy should execute a righteous vengeance on the impenitent. Nay, his own honor, as the well-beloved of God, demands that he should be uplifted in glory and power, over all those who insulted and reviled and persecuted himself and his people.

Christ, also, has redeemed his people. God has accepted the ransom price. He has, therefore, given him his people, even all who believed upon his name. Therefore, to make his glory as a Saviour most fully manifest, the Father appoints him judge; that with his own lips, those out of which went forth his atoning life, those from which have proceeded so many intercessory prayers, he might pronounce the acquittal of his people; and, with his own hands, that were nailed upon the cross, and so long stretched forth in petition, he might put upon their heads the crown of life.

Thus the apostle declares that God has given assurance of Christ being the judge of the world, by raising him up from the dead, because in raising him from the dead, God the Father by the Eternal Spirit declared Christ's merit in the covenant complete, and his atonement finished.

Here is great comfort for the believer. Sinner though he has been, and is, he shall meet no angry judge. The judge is he who once was his advocate, his elder brother, his sympathizing friend, his everlasting righteousness. Jesus sits upon the throne, — Jesus, who saves his people from their sins.

But it is a huge aggravation of terror to the impenitent, that they shall see in their judge the Saviour they rejected and scorned. All hope will be at an end when the Saviour condemns. They then will be willing to give worlds, if they had them, for one of those gracious invitations, or of those hours of pleading mercy which they once scorned in such frequency. Then shall they be without excuse, for they would not believe and repent, until the very blood of the cross witnesses against them. Oh, how fierce the anger of love like Christ's turned into unpitying wrath!

APPLICATION.

The wisdom of preparing for the judgment.
 We cannot avoid it.
 We cannot abide it.
 We cannot resist it.
 The method of preparing for the judgment.
 By meeting God now.
 In his word as the test and rule of our conduct.
 In prayer as in his searching presence.

In Christ as the only righteousness.
The folly of postponing the preparation.
We may die.
We may become hardened.
We need all our time.

LECTURE XXIV.

THE DIVINITY, PERSONALITY, AND WORK,
OF
THE HOLY GHOST.

TWENTIETH LORD'S DAY.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

THE DIVINITY, PERSONALITY, AND
WORK, OF THE HOLY GHOST.

QUEST. LIII. *What dost thou believe concerning the HOLY GHOST?*

ANS. First, that he is true and eternal God with the Father and the Son; secondly, that he is also given me to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits, that he may comfort me and abide with me forever.

THE lesson for to-day brings before us the doctrine of scripture concerning the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost; and is divided into two parts: the first, asserting his true and proper divinity, coequal and coessential with the Father and the Son; the second, his official work, or the gracious benefits conferred by his personal agency upon all believers.

FIRST: *The true and proper divinity of the Holy Ghost.*

This is an essential article in the faith of the Catholic church from the beginning and ever since. Devout Christians of all ages have been unanimous in cherishing this belief, not only because it is clearly taught in the divine Word, but also because it is an especial source of religious comfort and strength. It is found universally, that, as they who deny the necessity and reality of the atonement, deny the divinity of Christ, so they who deny the necessity and reality of a new birth, deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and *vice versa*; as they who deny the divinity of Christ, deny the atonement, so they, who deny the divinity of

the Holy Ghost, deny the new birth or regeneration. Just as our sense of sin and guilt makes the divinity of Christ the Saviour precious to us, because no merit less than infinite can suffice for our justification with God, so our sense of ignorance, infirmity, and corruption makes the divinity of the Comforter precious, because none less than almighty energy can suffice for our re-creation in the image of God unto eternal life. And as the evangelical Christian is never weary of meditating on the excellence of the atonement, and of him through whose vicarious righteousness it is accomplished, though the truth be never so familiar to him, so does he delight to confirm, by repeated examination of scripture testimony, his faith in the divine perfections of that gracious agent by whom he is brought out of darkness into light, and from the depths of sin to the heights of glory. Nor let any be impatient of this discussion, because, as they think, their faith in the article before us is settled, so that they need no further instruction on it; for, in the first place, with all deference to the ordinary information of professing Christians, it may be questioned whether there are not at least some in every congregation who have not even glanced over the scriptural evidence of this doctrine; or, if they have, are prepared to state it for the satisfaction of an inquirer, or defend it against a caviller, as they are bound to do, should occasion require. Besides, it is the office of the blessed PARACLETE (Comforter), whose divine honor we celebrate, to teach us all things, and to bring all things to our remembrance; nor can we hope to enjoy such great benefits, except we use the means by which he imparts them. Were the exhibition of Christian doctrine to

be suspended because most Christians are acquainted with it, the younger disciples would soon be found ignorant, and all forms of mischievous error would grow up in the church from the absence of teaching the contrary. Nor are we without reason of fear that this particular doctrine, fundamental and edifying as it is, has, especially of late, received too little consideration.

It must be obvious to you, that, though the doctrine of the Holy Ghost pervades the whole Scriptures, it is not so formally or elaborately expressed as that concerning the mediator Christ Jesus; and the reason is, that our Lord being presented to us in a human form, and being indeed man, there was greater need that his personal divinity should be assured; and also, as the basis of our justification should be fully apprehended by us, there was greater need that his work should be thoroughly explained; while the purely spiritual nature of the Comforter, and the inexplicable character of the process through which he accomplishes his work in the hearts of men, render it necessary only that his agency and his office should be revealed. The Scripture answers no idle or curious questions, nor will open its living oracles for any who are not of a humble and childlike mind. Hence, a much larger portion of both the creed and the catechism is given to declarations respecting Christ than to those respecting the Holy Ghost. We may, however, regret (if an expression of the kind be allowable) that the church has not provided us with more instruction on this subject; but if the treatment be brief, it should be, as far as possible, clear and explicit.

It must also be remembered that, while the doctrine of the Trinity is traceable by the light of the gospel,

throughout the older Scriptures, it is emphatically a doctrine of the New Testament; and that the titles of the three eternally distinct and coexistent persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though descriptive (at least for aught we know) of the ineffable relations existing between them from eternity, are throughout the evangelical books descriptive of their several offices in the plan of redemption.

With this preface let us now most reverentially consider under three heads the third adorable person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

I. His name, — THE HOLY GHOST.

II. His distinct *personality*.

III. His true *divinity*.

I. His name : — THE HOLY GHOST.

Ghost and *spirit* are, in our English Scriptures, synonymous and interchangeable terms. Thus (Luke xxiii. 46) we read: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit*; and having said thus, he gave up the *ghost*." The original for both words is the same (compare the Greek of Matt. xxvii. 50, and of John xix. 30). *Ghost* is a purely English word; *spirit*, a Latin word anglicized; and both translate a Hebrew word (רוּחַ *ruah*), which, when applied to living beings, is, throughout the Old Testament, translated *spirit*. Both the Hebrew and Greek terms are figurative, the Hebrew signifying primarily *wind*, and the Latin *breath*, and both are intended to express the immaterial or unsubstantial nature of the class of being which we call spirit. In those languages, no nearer approach could be made to a designation of existence not bodily. The sound of the words shows their origin, — *ruah*

resembling that made by the wind; *spi-ritus* that made by the breath. Our English word *ghost* seems to be radical and primary; at least its etymology is now too obscure to be traceable. It is possible that it was adopted for the same reason of sound, *ghos-t*, or *gheis-t*, though the conjecture is very doubtful, many English words, having no relation to wind or breath, having the same sibilant sound. Certain it is, that, while the Hebrew word is *wind*, and the Latin *breath*, the English *ghost* is never used but to signify either the spirit of man (and that after its separation, or at the moment of its separation, from the body) and the adorable HOLY SPIRIT, or HOLY GHOST. Spirit is also used in both testaments for an extraordinary faculty, as a spirit of prophecy, or a spirit of divination, and as Daniel is said to have had "an excellent spirit" (compare Dan. v. 12, and vi. 3); and again for a prevailing temper or disposition, as a spirit of fear, or of bondage, or of the world, or of meekness, or of heaviness; and there are other uses of the term, which need not be cited. No such use, however, is made of our word *ghost*, which has this advantage, that it not only translates the original, but gives the exact idea in the venerable name of the Holy Ghost. Still, as it is not the word in the original, we can avail ourselves of it only as an explicative. When, therefore, the Scriptures, or we, following the Scriptures, speak of the infinitely glorious Third Person of the Trinity as the HOLY GHOST, or SPIRIT, it is expressive of his simple essence as a living, intelligent, active being, without body or material substance, as when our Lord says: "God is a spirit;" and, again, when the disciples were affrighted on his appearance among them after his resurrection, "supposing that

they had seen a spirit," "he said unto them: . . . Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

But he is termed THE HOLY SPIRIT to distinguish him by that epithet emphatically from all created spirits, which, at their best estate, are infinitely below him in holiness, and capable of sin. He is infinitely, essentially, and unchangeably holy.

But, as The Third Person has this infinitely holy spirituality of essence (or being) in common with the First and Second Persons, it may be asked: Why he is specially and only designated as THE HOLY SPIRIT or GHOST? This may be at least partially (for there must be mysteries here into which we cannot enter) and satisfactorily answered from the character of the operations specially attributed to him, and particularly his work in believers; of which we shall soon have occasion to speak more at large. THE FATHER, throughout the development of the divine purposes, is exhibited as the representative of the godhead, directing and acknowledging the several operations. It is his will, as the will of the godhead, which is through all; but when the godhead speaks or visibly acts, it is ever by the Second Person or the Son; who, for this reason, is called "the WORD;" "the brightness (or shining forth) of his glory, and the express image (or open representation) of his person (or existence)." So, when the godhead acts silently, invisibly, and efficiently (that is carrying into effect or consummately) the divine purposes as manifested and operated by the Word, it is by the Holy Ghost, who acts wholly and solely in a purely spiritual manner. Especially, as we

said, is this the case with his divine work in the souls of believers, and in their bodies as related to their souls in the Christian life. All his effects there (we say effects, for all his works are effects, not preparatory or instrumental processes) are noiseless and invisible, or purely spiritual, as "quickening," "converting," "convincing," "enlightening," "strengthening," "sanctifying." Hence is he made known unto us as the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. The name is also characteristic of the mode by which he proceeds from the Father. By the Son the Father *speaks*; but the Holy Ghost, in answer to the prayer of the Son, is *breathed* or spiritually sent through the words and the works of the Son, to effect their purposes. Thus the Saviour not only spake to the disciples after his resurrection, but, by the mediatorial prerogative, which was then his, "he *breathed* upon them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This breathing, however, was only a type or perceptible sign of the spiritual method by which the Holy Ghost is imparted, and for the convincing of the disciples not yet weaned from the habit of sensible manifestations under the old law; so was also the shape of fire hovering and descending like a dove on the head of Christ, as he came up from his baptism by John, and "the rushing mighty wind" that "filled the place" where the disciples were sitting at the Pentecost, and the "cloven tongues like as of fire" that "sat upon each of them." For the Holy Ghost, being pure spirit, cannot be breath, or wind, or fire; though each of those elements may be employed by divine pity of our weakness to represent in a lively manner his mysterious, mighty, and purifying influences. And you will observe that all the effects

wrought simultaneously with those perceptible exhibitions, were spiritual. The baptism by fire was the anointment of our Lord's humanity with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, "the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" according to Isaiah's prophecy. So with the gifts to the disciples at the Pentecost. Their tongues, or any of their corporeal faculties, were not altered; but through the energies of the Holy Ghost within them, they had new spiritual faculties to use them in the divine service. There is but one work or effect of the HOLY GHOST, which was not apparently of this purely spiritual character, and that was the conception of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost; but the mysteries of the incarnation are far beyond the limits of our inquiry. The effects wrought in physical nature by the Spirit of God at the beginning of our system, are to be regarded as a gigantic type of the new spiritual creation in Christ Jesus;* and even in them the operation of the Spirit was in giving efficiency to the Will uttered by the Word; for, at each step of the process, we read that the Lord said, Let the thing be. There was a Trinity in the creation, as, indeed, the learned Jews failed not to perceive, though they understood not the doctrine and had not the term,—the Will, the Word, and the Energy; the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. But, as we observed in our preface, it is with reference to the plan of redemption that the names by which the three persons of the godhead are made known to us, are used in the evangelical writings.

II. The distinct *personality* of the HOLY GHOST.

* In both cases it is giving *life* which is immaterial.

The testimony of the Scriptures is of such a kind, that if we prove by it the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost, his divinity must be acknowledged as a necessary consequence. Hence, those who object to the belief that the HOLY GHOST is the third coequal person of the Trinity, are divided into two classes: one, like the Arians, considering that sacred name to signify a mere influence of God; the other, like the Sabellians, considering it to be another title of the Father. Had we time, it would be well to examine and refute both these heresies in detail, but such particularity is not required. It will appear from the use we shall make of Scripture-testimony, that the HOLY GHOST is a *being*, not an accident or quality or mode of being; an *agent*, not an action, and an agent distinct from the two other divine agents,* Father and Son; and, also, that will, affection, action, and authority are predicated of (or ascribed to) him. Proof of these several points demonstrate his distinct personality.

1. In the first place, it is remarkable, that, while the Greek *πνεῦμα*, with its article and qualifying adjective *τὸ ἅγιον*, is in the neuter gender, the pronouns and other relatives to it are in the masculine, showing, as any one acquainted with language knows, that the Spirit referred to is a person and not a *thing*: "But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, *whom* the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things." Again, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you; and when *he* is come, *he* will reprove the world of sin," etc. *Αὐτὸν*: *Ἐκενος*. Such language clearly designates, not

* Heber's Bampton Lectures, Lect. I. p. 46.

an influence or an effect, but a distinct, personal, intelligent agent; besides which, Comforter is a personal appellation.

2. Personal properties are ascribed to him.

a. Will. As in 1 Cor. xii. 4-11, where the apostle, having described the "diversities of gifts" and "administrations," says: "All these worketh (energizeth) that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

b. Knowledge. As 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11: "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man (no one) but the Spirit of God." So, also, our Lord (John xiv. 26): "He shall teach you all things;" therefore, he knows all things.

c. Affections. Rom. xv. 30: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit."

d. Power. Rom. xv. 13: "That ye may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost;" and xix. 12, "through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Holy Ghost."

e. Liableness to offence and resistance. Matt. xii. 31, 32: "All other sin and blasphemy (blasphemy is insult to God) may be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (or blasphemy of the Spirit) shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." And Acts v. 3, 4.

where Peter says to Ananias: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Again, 9th: "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" So, also, the martyr Stephen, vii. 51: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye;" and the apostle (Ephes. iv. 30): "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God; whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

3. Personal acts are ascribed to him.

Instances of this are very numerous, and it is impossible to make any candid reader of the Bible believe that the Holy Ghost is, in nearly every passage where his operations are referred to, spoken of otherwise than as a personal agent. "Moving," "striving," "quickening," "descending," "testifying," "convincing," "interceding," and many other actions that occur to your memory, all belong to a personal agent. Take two passages for examples: Acts xiii. 2, 4. "The Holy Ghost said: Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. . . . So they, being sent of the Holy Ghost, departed." Acts viii. 39, in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion, we read that "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." But especially his personal agency is asserted in the principal divine works of our creation and redemption.

Gen. i. 2: "In the beginning the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters."

In the incarnation he overshadowed the Virgin.

At our Lord's entrance upon his official work, the Holy Ghost visibly descended upon him, as he came up from his baptism by John, according to the prophecy

of Isaiah that "the Spirit of the Lord" would anoint him as the Saviour.

In his death (Heb. ix. 14) he, "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God."

In his resurrection, he was quickened by the power of the Spirit (Eph. i. 20; ii. 1), and was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. i. 4); see, also, 1 Peter iii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 45.

So, also, in the application of the benefits purchased by the Mediator to the souls of believers, which is everywhere ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

In their regeneration or quickening with a divine life; they are born of the Spirit, and quickened by the Spirit, (John iii. 3; Ephes. ii. 1.)

In their adoption: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," (Rom. viii. 14-17.)

In their sanctification: "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. vi. 11.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (iii. 16.)

In their graces: Faith, hope, love, strength, comfort, assurance, and all the blessed, holy consequences flowing from them, which we know, without now citing texts sufficiently familiar, are all ascribed to the direct agency of the Holy Ghost, and are summed up in the apostolical benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all;" "the communion of the Holy Ghost" there signifying participation in all the benefits of the Holy Ghost, promised to and bestowed upon all believers.

4. Lest, however, some might yet, though in the face of all these proofs to the contrary, continue to assert that these many mentions of the Holy Ghost refer only to acts of God the almighty Father, and do not imply distinct personalities in the godhead, let us call to our minds several passages in which such distinctness is manifest. Thus, at the unction of our Lord, (Luke iii. 22,) we read: "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Here is the Father speaking from heaven to the Son on earth, and the Holy Ghost descending from heaven on the Son.

Again, in the divinely prescribed formula of baptism: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (the three present at the baptism of our Head.) Nothing but the extremest prejudice could bring one to believe that these several names belong to only a single person, and do not intend three distinct persons in the godhead.

So with the apostolical benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the grace of his purchase,) the love of God, (the Father representing the propitiated godhead,) and the communion of the Holy Ghost, (or participation in the energies of the Holy Ghost by whom the grace is applied to us, and "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts,") which is according to the interpretation given in Ephes. ii. 18: "For through him (our Lord Jesus) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Thus our Lord (John xiv. 16): "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, (mark, not another Comfort, but another Comforter,

an agent like himself,) that he may abide with you forever." Again, 26: "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." Here is the Son asking the Father that he would send another personal Comforter.

We might heap texts upon texts to prove the distinct personality of the HOLY GHOST, but these specimens of the several classes of proofs are quite enough to establish the doctrine.

III. His true *divinity*.

This has, in reality, been asserted by many of the texts cited under the former heads, but is corroborated by several classes of scriptural proofs, some from each of which may be added.

1. There are many places where the name of God is used interchangeably with that of the *Holy Ghost*, or Spirit of God. Thus:—

Isaiah vi. 8, 9, the prophet says: "I heard the voice of the LORD saying, . . . Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed but understand not; and see ye indeed but perceive not," &c. The apostle (Acts xxviii. 25) quoting this passage says: "Well spake the HOLY GHOST by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and understand not; and seeing ye shall see, and perceive not," &c.

So the Psalmist, xcv. 8-11, speaks of the people tempting and proving the LORD; and this is termed by the martyr Stephen a resisting of the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51): "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did so do ye."

Peter, in the condemnation of Ananias (Acts v. 3, 4), says first: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" and then: "Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God."

In the annunciation by the angel (Luke i. 35): "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

The apostle Paul declares, (2 Tim. iii. 16,) "that all scripture is given by inspiration of God." The apostle Peter, (2 Pet. i. 21,) that "prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. Attributes transcendently divine are given to the HOLY GHOST.

The offices ascribed to him imply supreme perfections. For how can he who "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," be other than infinite; or he who teacheth all things, otherwise than omniscient; or he who dwells at one and the same time in all believers, otherwise than omnipresent; or he who is the author of life and the worker of all miracles, otherwise than omnipotent; or he who was before all things and continueth in heaven the sanctifier of the church, otherwise than eternal? So we find him denominated emphatically "the eternal Spirit," "the Spirit of wisdom," "the Spirit of life," "the Spirit of power," "the Spirit of glory." The Epistle to the Ephesians, in its doctrinal portion, is wholly taken up with the "mighty working," or sovereign operations of the Holy Ghost, under various appellations expressive of an all-pervading energy.

3. So with the names of God, which are given to him, as has been shown in aforecited texts and many others.

4. And divine homage is claimed for him. Paul swears by him, or protests appealing to him as men do to God in a solemn oath. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." Blasphemy is a term especially and only signifying insult to God; yet, as we have seen, sin against the Holy Ghost is the worst kind of blasphemy. The body inhabited by the Holy Ghost is a temple of God, to defile which is sin against the indwelling divinity. So with the formula of baptism, and the apostolical benediction.

5. The same consummated acts of God are ascribed to each of the three divine persons. As the incarnation of Christ, who was sent of the Father, who came, and who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; his crucifixion; when "it pleased the Father to bruise him;" when he "gave himself a ransom for many;" and "offered himself through the eternal Spirit;" his resurrection, when the Father raised him up, he rose, and was quickened by the Holy Ghost. So with the correspondent acts of divine grace to believers in Christ.

In a word, unless we deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, which we have seen is to deny the Scripture, he must be considered a divine person, or God.

SECONDLY: *The official work of the Holy Ghost; or the benefits conferred by his personal agency upon all believers.*

"That he is also given me to make me by a true

faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits; that he may comfort me, and abide with me forever."

The operations of the Holy Ghost are distinguished by theologians as extraordinary and ordinary. The extraordinary are his operations on persons selected for special ministries in the church, who, therefore, need to be endowed with peculiar gifts: as the prophets, leaders, and teachers of ancient Israel, who were employed by the Holy Ghost, and certified by divine proofs, to make known the will of God; so, the apostle Peter says: "The prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:" and the apostles of the New Testament, who were employed and certified in like manner to make further revelations of the truth as it is in Jesus. The compilation of their writings, or such of them as God has seen fit to select, which we have in the sacred Scriptures, constitutes the word of God to us, — our sole and supreme and sufficient rule of faith and practice. The miraculous powers of the apostles and other eminent members of the primitive church, such as healing the sick, speaking with various tongues, were the signs that God was with them in their work of establishing Christianity, and are called "gifts of the Holy Ghost." When the canon of Scripture was complete, and the church fairly established, these extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost ceased, there being no longer any need of them.

The ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost are those which he performs toward men under the teaching of the gospel, but especially towards Christians. For, although the Catechism here speaks only of his work in believers, (because it is rather a catechism of Christian

experience than one of systematic theology), there are offices of the Spirit accompanying the truth toward unregenerate men: such as causing them, in some degree, to feel the force of the truth, to see the wrong of sin, to dread the wrath of God, and to acknowledge the necessity of religion. This is called by several scriptures "the striving of the Holy Ghost" ("my Spirit shall not always strive with men"), because it is exerted upon those who resist his merciful influences. So the martyr Stephen: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye;" and the apostle Paul, using another figure: "Quench not the Spirit." These operations in men who, notwithstanding, reject the gospel, resemble those which he directs toward the elect, but differ in their effect, the latter being always efficient to salvation, the former efficient in greater condemnation; as the design differs, in the one class being the full adoption of Christ's people, in the other being the vindication of the divine truth and justice. Hence they are sometimes described as the resistible and the irresistible graces of the Spirit.

Our lesson confines us to the work of the Holy Ghost in those who are saved, which is stated in three particulars: 1. A participation of Christ and all his benefits. 2. Religious comfort. 3. Eternal indwelling.

1. A participation of Christ and all his benefits.

The Holy Ghost, as has before been shown, is, according to the plan of redemption, the agent by whom the purpose of the Father, and the mediatorial work of the Son, are made efficient. Thus, it is the purpose of the Father (representing the Godhead) to

save; the Son, by his mediatorial work, provides the method of salvation, and the Holy Ghost effects the purpose of God by the application of the work of Christ to the sinner.

a. The redemption proceeds upon a system of representation. The sinner must be covered by the Saviour's suretyship: until he is thus in Christ, he is exposed to the wrath of God and all its terrible evils, but when in Christ, he enjoys through Christ all that is necessary for everlasting life, as a member of the body of which Christ is the head. Union to Christ, therefore, must be first; the benefits of grace are consequential. So the Catechism, "The Holy Ghost . . . is given me to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ." Here the parallel between the history of Christ and that of each of his people is remarkable. Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost. The life of the Son of God in the flesh was begun by the efficient action of the Holy Ghost; the life of the Christian in Christ must be begun by the power of the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born again," said our Lord to Nicodemus, "he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Of course this is figurative language, but most expressive. It implies that a new spiritual or moral or religious life is given to the soul which before was dead to all spiritual things, and that it is given or implanted by the gracious power of the Holy Ghost. This act of the Holy Ghost is, therefore, the beginning of our Christian life. Before the Holy Ghost thus acts upon our souls, we can, as regards spiritual things,

know nothing, for we are without perception; feel nothing, for we are without sense; do nothing, for we are without strength. Now the method of imparting this new life, which can come only through Christ, and be exercised only in Christ, is not arbitrary, but is by bringing us to a union with Christ. Our Lord himself compares it to a grafting of a branch (living indeed, as we all live before regeneration, but in an evil life) upon a good stem, which speedily sends through it its own better life. Christ is the stem, we are the branches; the Holy Ghost is the ingrafter. We cannot graft in ourselves, Christ does not graft us in, but the Holy Ghost, bringing us close to Christ, makes us partakers of Christ's life. Thus again, the instrument of regeneration by the Holy Ghost is the truth of Christ: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

It may be asked if there be not a divine work on the soul itself necessary before the word can have an effect, inasmuch as we are utterly insensible to truth before the new life is given? Doubtless we are so insensible, until by the Spirit we are regenerated; but doubtless, also, the Holy Ghost works always as the Spirit of Christ, through whose merit alone the giving of the new life is justified; nay, the life given is the life of Christ; Christ's life in us; "Christ in us the hope of glory;" "Christ formed in us." We may not limit the sovereign power of the Holy Ghost; and that he does sometimes sanctify children from the womb, grafting them into Christ before they can understand the truth, we should not dare to deny; but it is certain that the Holy Spirit, with persons of understanding, ever and

only works by the truth. He prepares the soil for the seed, and the seed for the soil; but the sowing and the preparation of the soil, so far as we can see, go together. Nay, there is a penetrating fitness in the word of God, whence it is called "the sword of the Spirit;" and "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hence, also, the necessity of "preaching the gospel to every creature," for it is when Christ is lifted up that "he draws men unto him" by his Spirit. But the sword must be wielded and directed by the almighty hand of the Spirit. So the preaching of the gospel ever precedes the conversion of sinners. Then, on the other hand, the soul receives the gospel, and life through the gospel by faith; and faith is a personal act, though a gift of God. So our Lord: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" and again, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" and several scriptures: "The just shall live by faith." Which, then, precedes in regeneration: the quickening of the soul, in order to its faith, or the application of the gospel to the soul to draw forth its faith? Pardon me, my questioning friend, if I say that there is a curious inquisitiveness here that should be checked, because the Scripture has not explained the mystery to us. Contending theologians have spent a world of metaphysics on this subject in vain, except to show the weakness of the strongest. All generation is a mystery, — life in its beginning and its actings is ever a mystery. Why, then, should we ask respecting spiritual life, the regeneration

of the soul, "how can these things be?" It is enough for us to know that the Holy Ghost alone regenerates the sinner by uniting him to the life of Christ; or, as our Catechism has it, by making us partakers of Christ; and that the union is effected by faith, which is his work. "He makes me, by a true faith, partaker of Christ." For faith is the first acting of the new-born creature, even faith clinging to Christ and drawing from him the life he sends through the soul.

b. Faith is the bond, if I may so speak, of the ingrafting, and the ingrafting is the work of the Holy Ghost; but through faith also the Holy Ghost carries on the work of salvation which is by Christ. Christ, the stem, is the treasury of the Holy Spirit's grace, and in consequence of the ingrafting, the regenerated soul is made partaker of Christ's benefits, that is, the benefits which Christ has purchased and extends to the believer.

Christ was not only conceived of the Holy Ghost, but, also, when he publicly assumed his office of our representative, the Holy Ghost came down upon him, and the voice of the Father was heard from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark, he speaks not thus of the Son in his original divinity alone; there were no need for such testimony; but of the Son incarnate, as our head and elder brother and representative. He adopted, — or, if you like not the term, seeing that the human nature of our Lord was begotten by the Holy Ghost, — he acknowledged the man Christ Jesus as his Son, with the Son who had been ever from eternity his only begotten.

So the *first* benefit we receive from our union to

Christ, is adoption of the Father, a participation of the sonship of Christ. How can it be otherwise, since the believer is in Christ, the Son, than that he must also be a son? He is made one with Christ, a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, deriving from Christ the same life Christ has, life derived from his sonship to God. Hence the Holy Ghost in this work is styled "the Spirit of adoption," and is said to be "in our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying, 'Abba, Father.'" We are permitted, nay, urged by the Spirit of Christ within us to go to God, asking and expecting to receive, as dear children, all the blessings which God loves to bestow upon Christ his Son, for those who are sons in him. Not only for this life, but infinitely more for the life to come, may we look for these gracious participations with Christ. Hear the apostle: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby ye cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." When Christ was on earth, he obeyed the Father through all temptation and suffering, deriving strength from his Father through prayer; now that he is in glory, he lives in full satisfaction at the right hand of his Father. So, beloved brethren, if we have the evidence of being in Christ by the power of his Spirit in us, making us obedient through all trial, and prayerful in a constant dependence upon God, we have the evidence of our adoption by God, and the earnest of a participation in

Christ's everlasting joy. Trial is but an evidence of our legitimacy, and of our Father's faithfulness educating us to go up higher even to his holy presence among the angels. But of all the blessings of this adoption, time would fail us to speak.

When the Father acknowledged our Lord to be his Son, he shed down upon him the Holy Ghost; and this was in accordance with the prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." When that Spirit came down, it returned not again but rested upon Christ, entering as it were into his blessed person and abiding there, as the animating spirit of all, of each of his members. These, then, are the other inseparable benefits of union with Christ.

"The spirit of wisdom and understanding." So the apostle prayed for his brethren, and for us, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto 'them' the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, (Christ,) the eyes of 'their' understanding being enlightened, that 'they' might know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Knowledge of divine truth in Christ is given unto us by participation with Christ the Word and the wisdom of God, and knowledge which we could not acquire until gifted with new sight, or see even with our opened eyes unless it were presented to us by the Spirit of Christ. "He shall take," said the Master when promising "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," "of the things of the Father and shew them unto you." Yet must this illumination come through Christ, for no

man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him."

"The spirit of counsel and might." The apostle says that "the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God." Not only are they illuminated with all Christian doctrine, but they are inspired with a holy prudence such as Christ showed in his life for all their Christian conduct. As the steps, not only the way he was to walk in, but even the steps, each step he was to take, were ordered by the Lord, so do they who are united to Christ, animated by his spirit of sonship, and taught the meaning of his word, hold sweet communion with him by prayer, and receive "counsel" for all the duties required of them, whatever be their difficulties and trials. They follow Christ, nay, he walks with them, "reasoning with them out of the Scriptures of all things concerning himself," "till their hearts burn within them." Nor is it "counsel" only, but "might." The same Holy Spirit that upheld the humanity of Christ, while, walking according to the divine counsel, he bore the burden of our sins on toward his cross where he nailed them forever, is given to his people, dwelling in them as a power from on high, pervading all their faculties, and, weak as they are, making them strong through Christ's strengthening them. So says the apostle in that aforecited prayer for the Ephesians, "That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." The same power that wrought in Christ, even the Holy Ghost, works in all those who

are members of his blessed body, quickening them as he was quickened, strengthening them as he was strengthened, until, like him, they are also brought safely and triumphantly to sit with him in the heavenly places. — (See the whole connection through the second chapter of Ephesians.)

“The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Just in proportion as we know the truth, the hopes it sets before us, and the honorable duties it requires of us, will the Spirit of adoption make us, as Christ was, reverent of our Father’s will and constant presence. How shall they who are conscious of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, pollute his temple! How shall he, dwelling within them, not keep their thoughts in “a constant waiting for Christ?” “He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself so to walk even as he also walked;” and the rule of the Saviour’s life, as declared by the apostle at the Pentecost, was to “set the Lord alway before his face.”

Here, then, we see that, from their union with Christ by the grace of the Holy Ghost, believers enjoy, with the benefits of *adoption*, *illumination*, and *strength*, a divine *sanctification* begun with their new birth, carried on through all their experience here, and sure to be made perfect where Christ is now perfect in his kingdom on high. And all this is the work of the Holy Ghost through Christ and by the word of Christ; for the Holy Ghost comes to us only through Christ’s meritorious intercession; and he, though he knows all things, knows no other method of the Spirit’s operation but through the gospel. “Sanctify them,” prayed he to the Father, as he had promised his disciples that he would pray for the Comforter, — “sanctify them

through thy truth, thy word is truth.” The Spirit of Christ in the heart, and the Spirit of Christ in the word, unite to make the believer of the truth perfect in Christ Jesus.

Two points remain for our handling, which shall be brief.

2. Religious comfort.

“The Holy Ghost is given me that he may comfort me,” says the believer in the 53rd answer of the Catechism.

He must have been but a careless reader of Scripture, who has not seen how full it is of promises and revelations of comfort. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem;” was the language of prophecy fulfilled in the gospel. And he must have had but little experience of the Christian life, who does not feel the need of constant comfort from his Father in heaven. The preaching of Christ was almost altogether made up of comfortable words; his last sermon to his disciples at the supper was of nothing else; and his apostolic successors followed his gracious example. So an eminent title of the Holy Ghost is “The Comforter”; and, although the original term may have other meanings which we have now no time to look into, Comforter is a true, and not the least appropriate, signification.

The believer needs comfort. He is here in a state, and under a process of discipline, chastened, and often sorely, by the faithful hand of his wise Father; a chastening often compared to the passing of precious metals through the intense heat of a refiner’s furnace; nay, sometimes, to crucifixion itself. His Master was a man of sorrows, and he must drink of his Master’s cup, and

be baptized with his Master's baptism. Does he not need comfort?

He has to endure "the contradiction of sinners" against Christ and himself as a follower of Christ. His good name impeached, his motives perverted, his faithfulness ridiculed and denied; yes, his life's life sworn away by cruel, downright lies, as was Christ's. He sees the sins of men against his God, and "rivers of water run down his eyes, because men keep not God's law." He beholds Christ's cause wounded in the house of his friends by the inconsistencies of Christians, the teachings of error in doctrine and morals, until his heart bleeds with anguish. Does he not need comfort?

But most of all he is humbled and in agony because of his own sins; the body of sin and death about him, the world that lies in wickedness around him, and the malicious tempter ever active in assailing or seducing, or entrapping him. His heart is still at times "an evil heart of unbelief," at all times "deceitful above all things." Does he not need comfort?

But he has it in Christ, and by the Holy Ghost through Christ, and our previous learning tells us how.

He is united to Christ by a bond close, tender, and never to be broken. Every form of trouble he is called to know, Christ passed through, except the consciousness of sin, and the Redeemer was sorely burdened with our imputed guilt. The Saviour has united him to himself. He has Christ's sympathy. O blessed thought! Christ knows all he suffers, knows what will relieve it, knows how to turn it to his profit. He has Christ's teachings — all his faithful word, all his precious promises, all his gracious directions. The Holy Ghost brings them to him, enables him to read them, to un-

derstand them, to make them his own. He has Christ's strength to uphold him. The strong right arm is thrown around him, and in the darkest hour and through the deepest floods Christ is by his side, whispering in the feeble breathings of friend consoling his friend: "Fear not, I am with thee." "Let not thy heart be troubled." "My rod and my staff they shall comfort thee." And all this is by the power of the Holy Ghost uniting him to Christ, his living, divine glorified head.

He is adopted of the Father. By his union to Christ, he is a child of him in whose hand are all things, who withholds from him nothing that is for his good, and counts all things his, as he sees he has need. His sufferings are not punishments but chastenings, all signs of a divine love and of a preparation for glory. So he looks up beyond his troubles, and sees his Father's loving, pitying eye, and says: "It is well!" "Let him do what seemeth him good!" Blessed be his name! Only let my sufferings make me like him who suffered for me; and from my cross take me, Lord, into thy kingdom!

He has the witness of the Spirit, and it is the earnest of his inheritance; shedding by its sanctifying grace the sweet assurance of hope that there is a rest remaining for him; an inheritance where shall be no more sorrow, nor pain, nor temptation, because there shall be no more sin. This is enough to turn his sorrow into joy, his shame into glory, his prayers into thanks. "For I reckon," says he, "that the sorrows of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us."

Nor is his least comfort derived from that which our

instructor makes a *third* particular of the Holy Spirit's blessing: eternal indwelling.

"The Holy Ghost is given me that . . . he may abide with me forever." What were he without the Holy Ghost? without his grace keeping him united to Christ, shedding the boldness and reverence of the adoption through his heart, opening to him the sweet Scriptures, and opening his eyes to read them; strengthening his heart with an eternal life that sends love throbbing along all his veins; nay, sanctifying his soul with holy thoughts and desires and purposes, the sure presages, the actual foretastes of heaven itself? What were he, if ever that Holy Spirit were taken from him? if he were left to fall from Christ into his blindness and sin and death?

But the Spirit will not depart. The same faithful master who promised the Comforter, and has sent him according to his promise, said: "He shall abide with you forever." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." As he abode in Christ, so will he abide in the Christian, until he follows Christ on and on through trial and conflict, down through the dark valley, and then into the glory.

Nor then will the Comforter depart, for heaven is full of the Holy Ghost. Shall the Father delight in his perfect children, shall the Son rejoice as he sees his own likeness in all his sanctified brotherhood, and the Holy Ghost, who made the Father's purpose and the Son's work efficient, not have his peculiar satisfaction? No! He shall abide with them, in them forever; forever opening new depths in their glorified faculties, and filling them with new revelations of God's infinite riches; forever leading them to new methods of happy

obedience, and inspiring new strength for the unprecedented privileges of service above; forever transforming into a closer likeness to God, and changing them into the same image from glory unto glory. Even as they walk among the trees of life, the clear waters of the river of life, which are the influences of the Holy Ghost, shall flow sparkling, deep and full for their taste and their bathing in bliss; and as they draw near to cast their crowns at their master's feet, and bask in the radiance of the Father's love, as together Father and Son sit on the throne, the Holy Ghost shall flow forth in waters of joy and holiness and peace; and the united Three receive his homage, his praises, and his thanks!

O blessed are they who know that there is a Holy Ghost, thrice blessed they in whom he dwells! Yea, blessed forever!

LECTURE XXV.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION
OF SAINTS.

TWENTY-FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE
COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

QUEST. LIV. *What believest thou concerning the "Holy Catholic Church" of Christ?*

ANS. That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof.

QUEST. LV. *What do you understand by "the Communion of Saints"?*

ANS. First, that all and every one who believes, being members of Christ, are, in common, partakers of him, and of all his riches and gifts; secondly, that every one must know it to be his duty readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts for the advantage and salvation of other members.

THE history of the Creed, especially before the close of the fourth century, is obscure; but we may believe that the more ancient copies ended with the article on the HOLY GHOST, as it was evidently an enlargement of the formula prescribed for baptism: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And, truly, as we have discovered from our previous studies, the true doctrine of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, comprehends all that is essential to saving faith. Subsequently, to answer the questions of inquirers, and to rebuke error, it became expedient to add the four other articles which set forth the great blessings consequent upon faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, viz: The establishment of the

church and the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

In the most ancient copy we have of the creed of the Roman church, we find neither "the communion of saints," nor "the life everlasting"; but "the communion of saints" is, clearly, a further statement of "the church"; and "the life everlasting" of "the resurrection." In some copies, the article on the church was placed at the end, and "the communion of saints" was inserted last of all. The epithet "catholic," after "holy," before "church," was also of comparatively late date, not occurring in the oldest copy of the Roman symbol, and having been supplied to teach the unity of the true church, though divided into many particular churches, all holding the same faith. Finally, by general consent, the creed obtained its present order, which is the most proper; for "the forgiveness of" our "sins" is assured to us on our union to Christ's true body, his church; "the resurrection of the body" is the fulness of our personal adoption, and the heavenly "life" which follows our triumph over death and the grave, is "everlasting."

It is also proper to note a variation of the creed, as we have it in the Catechism before us, from the copy in our communion service. There we read: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church," etc. Here it is: "I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in the holy catholic church," etc.,—"I believe in" being inserted before the church. The form, as it is in the communion service, is that of the Roman Breviary (where it is styled "the Apostles' Creed"), and has been adopted, with two exceptions, by all the Protes-

tant churches, especially by the Church of England, and the Presbyterian, following the Westminster Assembly. The exceptions are the French and the Dutch Reformed churches. Both of these insert the additional "I believe," which is after the version of the Greek church; but neither of them have the word "in." They say, "I believe an holy catholic church." The preposition "in" seems to be wholly without authority, not being found in either the Dutch, German, or Latin copies; and its presence here can be accounted for only by the criminal carelessness of the American translator or editor. Nay, it is in direct contradiction to many pious commentators on the creed, who solemnly call upon us to mark the distinction between that faith which is *in* the three adorable persons of the Godhead, and that which simply recognizes the fact of the church and its covenanted blessings.* There is, perhaps, unnecessary stress laid upon this distinction, but it shows that the interpolation of our transcriber is censurable and should be removed.

Let us now learn the doctrine which we are to receive concerning the church, and this may be opened agreeably to the 54th Question and Answer under the several names by which it is described.

1. "The . . . church." 2. "The holy . . church."
3. "The holy catholic church."

1. "The church." Our word *church* is probably

* Witsius *in loc.*, says: "Had the words run: '*I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church,*' it would have been difficult to connect the words '*I believe*' with '*the holy catholic church,*' so as to suppress the particle *in*. This, however, was necessary; for a faith is exercised with regard to the church in a manner very different from that in which it is exercised with regard to God. The church is a society of creatures in whom, whether collectively or individually, it is criminal to repose the confidence of faith."

first composed and then contracted from two Greek words, signifying, The House of the Lord (Κύριου οἶκος); but the word which it translates throughout the New Testament is *ecclesia* (ἐκκλησία), which is peculiar to the later Scriptures; and the first use of it is in the Evangelist Matthew's version of our Lord's saying to Peter: "On this rock I will build my church" (xvi. 18).

The Greek term was applied by the Athenians to signify an assembly of citizens (not the fifteenth part of the population) called out of the mass for civil functions by the herald or official crier. So the gospel is said to be proclaimed as by heralds sent of God, (χρηστῶν, to preach,) Jesus himself being the first (Matt. viii. 17). Those who are truly chosen of God hear and obey the heavenly voice, ("Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," John xviii. 37;) separating themselves from the world unto citizenship of the divine commonwealth or kingdom; and hence are denominated *elect*, or, as we take the term from the Latin, *elect*, that is, called out, selected from the rest of the world. Thus we read, (Rev. xvii. 14,) "They that are with him (the Lamb) are called (χληροὶ), chosen (ἐκκληστοὶ), and faithful." They were more than "called," they were elected. It is to this election of citizens that the apostle alludes, when, speaking of the Gentile believers, who, when "without Christ," were "aliens from the commonwealth (πολιτείας, citizenship) of Israel," he says: "Christ Jesus . . . came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that are nigh. . . . Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God (οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ), (Ephes.

ii. 11-19). They had now a right to enter the assembly (ἐκκλησία) or church. So our Catechism bids us say: "That the Son of God . . . gathers . . . to himself by his Spirit and his word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life." All who are effectually called (that is, by the Spirit in their hearts, as well as by the word in their ears), and so obey the gospel as to separate themselves from the world unto God through Christ, belong to his church, which in several scriptures is, as you know, termed "his body," — that is, a body of which he is the head.

It is evident that the bond of this citizenship, the incorporating principle uniting each to Christ, and all to each other, must be *faith*, as the Catechism has it: "A church . . . agreeing in true faith." They are "called" by the gospel, which is a proclamation of pardon and grace through Jesus Christ; it is because they are "of the truth" that they hear and obey the divine call; and, when brought into the (ἐκκλησία) church, they are ruled and established by the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus the apostle in the aforecited chapter of Ephesians: "Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, (that is, the truth they testified to,) Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." So, also, (1 Cor. i. 2, 3,) the apostle offers Christian salutation to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." All who acknowledge Christ as their Lord (which no one can truly do but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3), and profess his doctrine as delivered by

the apostles and prophets, belong to, and are united in, the church of Christ. Nor may we confine this church to those who have believed since the advent of Christ. The gospel had been declared, imperfectly indeed, but with increasing light ever since the fall, when the first promise, that of "the seed of the woman," was given; it was the "Spirit" of Christ which in Noah "preached" to the antediluvian sinners "while the ark was a-preparing" (compare 1 Pet. iii. 13, 14, and 2 Pet. ii. 5). The apostle (Gal. iii. 8, 17) says expressly that the gospel was preached unto Abraham "four hundred and thirty years" before the law; the design of both the epistle to the Galatians and that to the Hebrews is to show that the gospel was couched in all the ceremonies of the Levitical law. Jesus, our master, during his memorable walk with the two disciples to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself;" and the writer to the Hebrews, in his eleventh chapter, combines in a common, justifying faith all who believed those revelations of eternal life by a salvation promised. Hence were they of the Old Testament united by faith in the same doctrine with those of the New, as members of the true church. So our Catechism: "The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world gathers . . . to himself by his Spirit and word out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith."

You will have observed that this church is an assembly, a citizenship of believers, of whom Christ is the head, and that the bond of their union is the personal faith of each member in Christ; so that the pretensions of the papists, and of kindred sectaries, who place the

church in the clergy or other ecclesiastical officers, are most preposterous. Were there no clergy on earth, there would not be less a true church of all who believe in Christ.

2. "The holy . . . church." *Holy* has two senses not inconsistent with each other: one, that of freedom from, or of superiority to, moral evil, — as the *Holy* Ghost; the other, that of being set apart to God and his service, as were the vessels of the temple, the temple itself, and the whole nation of Israel. When a moral creature sets himself apart to the divine service, he becomes morally holy in the degree that he is consistent with the dedication. So God says to us: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." *Saint* or sanctified is synonymous with holy, being the Latin form of the word. Thus our Lord says: "For their sakes I sanctify myself (*i. e.* dedicate myself to God in my atoning work), that they also might be sanctified (*i. e.* set apart to God's service) through the truth." And the apostle speaks of those that are "*sanctified* in Christ Jesus, called to be *saints*." It is in this latter sense that the church of God is holy: it is sanctified or set apart, and belongs to God in Christ. The church is Christ's own; by his choice, by his purchase, by his calling, by his sealing to his service: "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquities, and purify unto himself a peculiar people (a people *his own*), zealous of good works." The church and each member of it is set apart to the service of the divine glory in Christ, and all his gracious operations toward and in the church, and each believer, are for that supreme end. So the Catechism: "The Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and pre-

serves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith." The truth, faith in which is the bond of its union, is the means of its sanctification; whence, also, true faith is, from its very nature, fruitful of holy living; and no one, who does not sanctify himself to the service of God in Christ, has evidence that he belongs to his holy church.

Because of this election or grafting into Christ, the church is holy before God. Not that every or any member of it is pure and blameless in his own character, (for even Paul, after he had been long an apostle, confessed himself "chief of sinners,") but because the believer is washed from the guilt of his sins by the blood of Christ, and is so covered by the righteousness of Christ, his infinite surety, that God is well pleased with him for Christ's sake; as the apostle says: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; and "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Thus to sanctify the church was the purpose of Christ's atonement. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the word (*i. e.* the application of the gospel); that he might present it to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." As the individual believer is perfect in Christ Jesus from the imputation of Christ's righteousness, so is the entire church.

There is, besides, a real or actual sanctification of the church by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the seal of its union with Christ. The sinner, on be-

coming by faith a member of Christ's body, is separated from sinners not only in form but in principles of life. He has a "new heart" given to him, and a "right spirit" put within him. The Holy Spirit, having thus begun his moral transformation, carries it on surely, though gradually, to perfection, enlightening his mind with the truth, sweetly constraining him by the love of God to obey the truth, strengthening him against temptation, and comforting him under all afflictions through the truth; so that, at the great coming of the Lord Jesus, he is sanctified "wholly, body, soul, and spirit." What is true of the individual members is true of the whole church. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." — Ephes. v. 25-27.

The church, thus chosen and called of God in Christ, sanctified and upheld by God in Christ, is forever safe with God in Christ, ordained unto everlasting life. So the Catechism: "The Son of God . . . gathers, defends, and preserves unto himself . . . a church, chosen to everlasting life."

3. "The holy catholic church." *Catholic* is not a scriptural word, though, after a time, much used by ecclesiastical writers. It is compounded of two Greek words, signifying *through all*; and, among the few classics who employ it, has the exact sense of *universal*. After the Pentecost, we find all the "called of God" then living, assembled at Jerusalem. This company of believers, baptized and communicating in the break-

ing of bread, was then the Christian church. But, as the gospel spread itself, and believers became not only very numerous but widely separated, it was necessary for Christians to organize themselves in smaller companies; whence, it is easy to see, the name of churches was given to such families of the faith: as the church at or of Antioch, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica. These several churches, subject to one divine head, and to the apostles appointed by him, holding the same faith, and observing the same sacraments, and maintaining the same discipline, were otherwise independent, so far as authority was concerned, of each other, except as they were brought under the direction of a "presbytery" or combination of elders, distinct traces of which are discoverable in the apostolical writings. Where there was need of more general consultation respecting some mooted point, a council was called; but the purpose of such council was specific, and its organization temporary.

However convenient, or, if you will, necessary, for greater usefulness such combinations as general synods, or general assemblies, or dioceses may be, they are merely conventional arrangements, such as the word of God leaves Christians to form as most expedient in the various exigencies that arise. The New Testament recognizes nothing but a church and a presbytery. There was, however, a vital bond uniting all true Christians and all minor churches, viz: "*faith in the common doctrine of Christ and the apostles.*" The church was not divided, but remained one body of Christ, though of many members. Hence the gradual adoption of a common symbol, or creed, or belief, by the mutual acknowledgment of which professing Chris-

tians might recognize each other throughout the world, however separated under their particular organizations. This creed set forth the main and essential doctrine of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as declared to the church for salvation, but touched no matters about which Christians might, without fatal error, hold various opinions. The devil, however, soon was busy in distracting the church, and, under pretence of superior purity, excited harsh and pragmatical spirits to withhold Christian communion from those who, though holding the great articles of the faith, differed from them in less important particulars. This was especially the case with the Donatists, a body of Christians in Africa, who, it is said (though too much credence should not be allowed to historians of the period), conceiving themselves to be wronged in some matter of church government, withdrew themselves from fellowship with their opponents. This schism occurred in the earlier part of the fourth century, and it is thought that about the same time the word "catholic" was inserted after "holy" and before "church." The object of the interpolation was not, therefore, to set up exclusive claims for any particular sect or body of Christians, however numerous or powerful, but, on the contrary, as the word itself shows, to repudiate and oppose such bigotry by acknowledging all who receive the doctrine set forth in the Creed after the word of God as true members of the one church of Christ. The very corrupt, if not utterly spurious, Church of Rome, grasping after dominion over all Christendom, has usurped this epithet of "catholic," and denounces all who deny her impious pretensions as in damnable schism from the body of Christ. On this, Secker, Archbishop of Can-

terbury, admirably observes: "It is no more than as if one diseased limb, perhaps the larger for being diseased, can be the whole body of a man; and by attempting to exclude us, they take the direct way to exclude themselves; unless God impute their uncharitable way of thinking and acting, as we hope he will, to excusable ignorance and mistake. The Church of England pretends not to be the whole catholic church, but is undoubtedly a sound member of it; so that we have much better ground to call ourselves catholics than they, were such names worth disputing about, which they are not." I quote these words of that eminent dignitary of the Episcopal church, to show that the exclusive pretensions, which have been and are daily so arrogantly flaunted in our faces by other members of his sect, make no part of their own church doctrines, but are as widely different from the Christian sentiments of not a few of its most distinguished doctors, as they are from true charity and religious decency. The true catholic acknowledges all who acknowledge Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be, by the appointment of the Father, and the grace of the divine Spirit, their only Lord and Saviour. They who make the church more narrow than this, practically disown this article of the Creed. They have no right to repeat it; but utter an untruth when they do so. Nay, they exclude themselves from the catholic church and from the communion of saints, as a branch, torn from the main stem, becomes not the tree, but only is separated from the life by which all the branches live.

Beware, therefore, I charge you, before God and his Christ who is Lord of all, how you allow your sectarian pride to go so far as to disown any of Christ's true

flock. The Scriptures, as we have seen, plainly teach that all who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, believe in Jesus Christ for the saving of their souls, and prove the sincerity of their faith by Christian practice, are members of his living body. They are as free from insisting upon entire conformity of doctrine and practice to be essential, but on the contrary enjoin the utmost charity and forbearance. The apostle Paul has a passage directly in point when (Rom. xiv. 1-18), speaking of some sharp contentions about matters quite as serious as some that divide Christians nowadays, he says: "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand. . . But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men." Therefore, (let me quote again from Archbishop Secker,) "Christ's church is the whole number of those who believe on him. How much soever they may differ in some opinions or practices, yet are they one in all things essential. How wide soever they may be dispersed throughout the world, they shall at last be gathered unto him. We can only judge according to appearances, and, there-

fore, to us, all must be members of Christ's church who make a visible profession of being Christians. But God sees every secret thought, and, in his eye, they alone belong truly to his church who serve him "in the hidden man of the heart, "that inward sincerity to human eye invisible."

Happy, unspeakably happy, is he who can adopt with humble confidence the words of our Catechism, and say, "I believe that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of" Christ's "holy, catholic church!"

You will have observed that throughout this discussion we have considered the church in its spiritual character, not as to the external or visible form of it; because such is the doctrine of the article. But it must not be overlooked, that God has required every believer in Christ's name to confess him before men, and all Christians to separate themselves from the world, and, hence, to constitute a visible body or kingdom of his servants for the publication of his truth, the celebration of his worship, and the performance of his commands. And as visible signs or rites are necessary for the outward manifestation of this church, he has appointed two sacraments: one, initiatory baptism, by which we are to declare ourselves, and be received as members of the church; the other, confirmatory, the Lord's Supper, by which we are strengthened in the doctrines we profess, and which that sacrament sets forth. None, therefore, who do not unite themselves to the visible church have a right to be considered members of the church spiritual. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the divinely appointed methods of making such open profession; and, therefore, none

who refuse to receive those sacraments act in conformity to Christ's requirements, or can be acknowledged as faithful Christians; though this must not be carried so far as to exclude those who have no opportunity of compliance, or even those who through ignorance (as the Society of Friends) consider the inner baptism of the Spirit and edification through the truth, which the sacraments represent, to be all that is necessary. This last is a very grave error, but we would fain hope not sufficient to obviate the christianizing power of faith in Christ Jesus.

These sacraments are, however, not in themselves of saving efficacy, and are of no value; nay, they become gross insults to God, except as they are the outward signs of inward grace.

The Lord Jesus, also, for wise purposes, ordained that certain men should be set apart for the public service of the church, in the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the maintenance of discipline, the disposition of charity, and the government of the Lord's house.

These offices are necessary for a church after the apostolic order; but Christians have differed as to the mode and details of the ecclesiastical system most accordant with the word of God; and especially three kinds of government have had their strenuous advocates, viz: The democratical or Congregationalist, the monarchical or the Episcopalian, and the republican-representative, or the Presbyterian. This last, our church, in common with the larger portion of the reformed churches, holds to be the most scriptural; but, while we believe that Presbyterianism is necessary to the *perfection* of a church, we should not think it

essential to the existence of a church, and cheerfully accord our Christian fellowship to all churches professing the main doctrines of Christian faith, notwithstanding their differing from us on some points of external order. "Such, indeed, as obstinately deny the fundamental doctrines, or transgress the fundamental precepts of Christianity, ought to be rejected from Christian communion. But to renounce communicating with any others who are willing to admit us on lawful terms, is the way to cut off ourselves, not them, from the body of Christ, who yet, we doubt not, will allow those on both sides to belong to his church, who through pardonable passions or mistakes will not allow one another to do so."* Indifference is a great sin, but "charity is the bond of perfectness."

SECOND PART.

As the perfection of holy obedience is love, and as it is the purpose of God that all his ransomed people shall be brought into a full and active harmony amidst the glory of heaven, we must look to see the recovery begun on earth. Hence we believe in "*the communion of saints*," a cordial acknowledgment of which is essential to the creed and character of a Christian. This is not a separate article, but supplementary to the statement respecting "the holy Catholic church," and has already been somewhat treated of under those terms; yet, is brought before us more specially by the 55th Question and Answer, which bid us say,

"*First*: That all and every one, who believe, being members of Christ, are in common partakers of him and of all his riches and gifts.

* Secker.

"*Secondly*: That every one must know it to be his duty readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts for the advantage and salvation of other members."

I. What constitutes "the communion of saints?"

We have already defined "saints" to be those set apart to the service of the divine glory in Christ Jesus. They were all by nature sinners, guilty, corrupt, and blind, "dead in trespasses and sins"; therefore equally and wholly dependent upon the grace of God for salvation. But they are each, by the same method of faith, united to Christ, that according to the blessed purpose of God they might receive from him through Christ by the Holy Ghost, all the pardon, adoption, and sanctification necessary for their complete redemption. Hence, as their natural ruin was the same, their saving benefits are the same, which last is their "communion," because the grace is participated in by each and all of them. They must be saved by the same methods and the same blessings. Called by the same heavenly voice, when they meet at the cross and at the throne of grace, each recognizes in each a counterpart of himself, having the same faith, the same needs, the same duties, the same temptations, and the same hopes. United to Christ, they are united in him to each other, with the same interests and sentiments and experience.

This is illustrated in the Scriptures by several striking figures. They are a flock led by one good Shepherd, into the same green pastures, beside the same still waters, and are to be gathered at last within the same heavenly fold. They are as "living stones" built up on the same foundation of Christian truth, "growing" unto a perfect and holy temple of God "by his Spirit"; strengthened by the same strength and made glorious

by the same glory. They are a family, begotten by the same divine energy in the same likeness, fed at the same table, sheltered by the same covenant, employed in the same duties, and heirs of the same inheritance, destined to the same eternal home, their heavenly Father's house. But the most instructive figure of all is the comparison of the church to a living "body," having "many members," all believers of the gospel, and one head, Christ. This body is not merely composed but organized, the members being "fitly joined together," having a common life, a common feeling, and a common growth unto a "fulness of stature," so that, if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

And, in order to keep this great and delightful fact constantly before us, the Holy Ghost confirms and reiterates it every time we celebrate the feast of love, which Christ ordained as the peculiar emblem of his church. The sacrament of the supper is "the communion of the body of Christ." Surrounding one table, eating of the same bread, drinking of the same cup, we receive one Christ into our souls and are received into his body. United to him, we are united to each other. We cannot be separated unless separated from him. So that, though each believes for himself, he must be socially, as well as individually, a Christian. We are "members one of another." The fellowship is vital to each as to the whole. The life from Christ, which we feel in our own hearts, is the life of all believers.

So, also, in the apostolical benediction we hear "the communion of the Holy Ghost" added to "the grace

of Christ and the love of God," which "communion" is the infinite store of grace and love and blessing that is from the Holy Ghost for the common enjoyment of all Christ's people. As "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," so it dwells by the Holy Ghost in all "the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

The idea will be more fully developed as we consider

II. What duties are consequent upon this communion.

1. The first obviously is: An acknowledgment of all who truly believe in Christ, and show forth fruits meet for repentance, as fellow-members of Christ. Christ brings us together in his body, the Holy Ghost animates us with one life. But of this we have already spoken, though we may add, that, if the holy angels rejoice over one sinner who repents, how much more should we rejoice to find ourselves joined to so great a company of sinners ransomed like ourselves from eternal ruin, and made heirs like ourselves of the same everlasting life!

2. From this acknowledgment will come—love to all Christians, and this, simply, because they are Christians, though the love may be heightened by peculiar circumstances. They are beloved of God our Father, as redeemed by the infinitely precious blood of his Son, sanctified by his Spirit through his word, and destined to manifest eternally the riches of the glory of his grace. How precious must they be to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when bought with such a price, sanctified by such grace, and intended for such glory! All their sins blotted out like ours, all their defects covered like ours, all their wants supplied like ours, from the fulness

of the Holy Ghost in the fulness of Christ, the love we feel for Christ our head should flow forth to all our fellow-members of his holy body; and his love to us make them dear to us for his sake. And this love should be cultivated, not waiting until it is drawn out of us by accidental circumstances. We should delight to meditate on the many members of Christ's elect body with whom we are joined, though they are scattered throughout the world. Our hearts should make voyages and journeys of discovery after them; and, remembering that they may be in affliction, and must be in temptation, we should pray for them and delight to hold them in the embraces of our faith. Is it not a most pleasant thought, that, from whatever spot on earth a Christian prays, his prayers go up to the one heart of Christ, and there meet with our prayers and the prayers of all other Christians; and so when blessings for each of us are sent, they all flow out from the same fountain of infinite love! How does this make us all one in communion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of grace and supplication which is given to us all, as the sign of our adoption!

3. With this love there will be sympathy. "As in water, face answereth to face, so answereth the heart of man to man." This is even more true of Christians. Our history is the same, saved from the same ruin by the same grace. Our difficulties are the same from the deceiving heart within, and from the temptations without; our duties are the same, the advancement of God's glory in the services of a Christian life; our comforts are the same, the covenant promises of the Father, the kinship of the Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; our hope is the same, of eternal bliss in our

father's house when the family shall all be brought home, — "no wanderer lost," — to dwell in love and joy and peace forever. The sympathy of Christ the head thrills through each and all the members of his blessed body, and so each member should sympathize with all the rest. This is the beginning of the communion of the church above: here, like our salvation, begun in sorrow; there, like our salvation, consummated in a happiness without alloy.

4. Such sympathy were nought, if it be not manifested by mutual assistance. Every one must know it to be his duty readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts for the advantage and salvation of other members. The church is an organized body, so that we cannot fail to be affected by the healthfulness or sickness of any member. Nay, as in the individual believer the grace of God operates through his own use of his own faculties, so in the church the grace we have in common operates through the zeal of its members. This cannot be made clearer than by remembering the apostle's words (Ephes. iv. 13,) when, speaking of the edifying or building up of Christ's body in the perfecting of the saints, he says we must "grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every saint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." Here you see that, while Christ is the edifier of the body, it is to edify itself; and, while there is "the effectual working" of the Holy Ghost "in the measure of every part" (*i. e.* the degree of grace and ability given to each member), the body is "compacted," and

"maketh increase" by "that which every joint supplieth," and this by the mutual aid of Christians united in love to the one head, and to each other.

In other words, it is the order of grace that Christians are instrumentally dependent upon each other; as we grow they grow; as they grow we grow. Whatever we do for their benefit is for our own; whatever they do for our benefit is for their own. Thus it is not only our duty, but our best interest, to impart freely of all God's gifts to us for the benefit of our fellow-Christians. There must be a communion of prayers and acts and gifts, as there is a communion of grace. If we refuse this closeness of union to our fellow-Christians, we shall suffer doubly; for the Holy Spirit will not use us as the channels of his grace to them, nor can the effectual working through them reach us. Nothing but weakness and death can result from such selfish isolation. It is this that the church needs now. When the Holy Spirit was poured out copiously upon the church at the Pentecost, "they had all things in common." The communion was complete; and, hence, the great spiritual prosperity and rapid growth of the church. The absence of such communion, or rather the imperfectness of it now, is a certain sign that the Holy Ghost is not with us as with them. If all Christians united their hearts and efforts and means for the glory of the true church, as they did, the gospel would soon cover the whole earth. We have talent enough, members enough, wealth enough to do it, if we fairly consecrated all without reserve. All we need is a true and hearty communion of saints.

Ah! beloved brethren, let us take into our souls the grand idea of this communion!

How vast the fellowship! With the saints of all ages in the past! With the saints of all ages in the future! With the church eternal in glory!

How comforting! We are not alone in our work, in our trials, in our hopes! Millions uncounted have been working for us, praying for us, rejoicing over us! Millions uncounted of hearts are now beating in unison with ours! Millions uncounted are to follow us, for whom we are even now transmitting the riches of grace!

How elevating the sentiment! What has the world equal to this *philanthropy*! — this bond of holy, unselfish, noble sympathy! It is the dawn of heaven!

"Not to me only," said our apostle, when anticipating his crown of celestial righteousness, — heaven would have lost for him the fulness of its bliss, if he had thought he was to receive it alone, — "not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing," — all whom the Father has chosen, all whom the Son has redeemed, all whom the Spirit shall have sanctified! The number whom no man can count, unanimous in praise and joy and strength and love without end!

O what a grand exalted song,
When every tribe and every tongue
Redeemed by blood with Christ appear,
And join in one full chorus there!

My soul anticipates the day,
Would stretch her wings and soar away,
To aid the song, the palm to bear,
And bow the chief of sinners there.

Amen.

LECTURE XXVI.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

TWENTY-FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

QUEST. LVI. *What believest thou concerning "the forgiveness of sins"?*

Ans. That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins and my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long; but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God.

AFTER the doctrine of "the holy Catholic church" properly comes a consideration of those benefits which every true member of Christ's body receives through faith in his name. These are concisely stated as three: The forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. The first we enjoy even in this life, the other two after death. Our present lesson respects

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; and we could not have a better guide for our thoughts than the clear and precise answer to the 56th Question which we have just read.

Let us examine it under four heads:

FIRST: *The nature of forgiveness.*

SECONDLY: *The author of forgiveness.*

THIRDLY: *The means of forgiveness.*

FOURTHLY: *The extent of forgiveness.*

On these several points we accept and profess the opinions of our church, not on its authority, but because they agree strictly with the Word of God out of

which they are taken. We bring no preconceived philosophy to the interpretation of the Scripture, but shall take the statements of Scripture, which is our only rule of faith, precisely as they are made, since from the very nature of the case we can know nothing of forgiveness except from the revelation of him, who, because he alone is our judge, can alone be our Saviour. Nor shall we attempt to vindicate the divine gospel of forgiveness against those who would teach in its stead a scheme of their own devising, since they contend with the words of the Holy Ghost.

FIRST: *The nature of the forgiveness of sins.*

What is sin? *Iniquity* (or inequality) is wrongdoing toward another. *Transgression* is a breaking of the precise bounds or rules fixed for our conduct by competent authority. *Unrighteousness* is non-conformity to right. Sin* (a purely English word, the others are from the Latin) includes all these, but has in addition a special sense of being committed against God; for though we may speak of iniquity or transgression or unrighteousness in our relations to men, we cannot without violence use the word sin, except as committed against God. In our English version, *sin* translates one word (*ἁμαρτία*), except in three places (Ephes. i. 7; ii. 5; Col. ii. 13), where another word (*παράπτωμα*) is found, which elsewhere is translated either *trespass* or *offence*. In one text we find both words (Ephes. ii. 1) "dead in trespasses and sins." But in every text where the former word, always rendered *sin*, occurs, it has the sense of offence to God; † so that our word

* Sin. German, *Sünde* (from *Sunder*, departure).

† The verb *ἁμαρτάνω*, in Matt. xviii. 15, 21; Luke xvii. 3, 4, is used with reference to man; but *ἁμαρτήμα*, *ἁμαρτία*, never.

sin corresponds exactly to it. Hence the excellently precise definition of the Westminster divines:

"*Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.*" It is the doing of what God has forbidden, or the not doing what God has commanded. So in the general confession of the Episcopal Church they say: "We have offended against thy holy laws: we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

The moral nature of man, however, is such, that his acts, inward or overt, are not instinctive or isolated, but proceed from certain moral tendencies within him, which, from lack of a more precise term, we call principles. Thus an honest man abstains from dishonest acts, because he has a principle or fixed determination to honesty within him; a dishonest man acts dishonestly from want of such a principle; and it is from the evidence he gives of having or lacking such principles that we form our judgment of his character. So one who has a reverent love for God in his heart will desire and endeavor to conform himself to all God's will, because he is governed by a principle of godliness. The absence of such a principle (which the Scripture calls the image of God, or likeness to God, because it is a correspondence of the creature to the Creator) renders our whole nature sinful, because it is wholly inclined to sin against God. Hence the Scriptures declare that we are sinners by nature: "By nature children of wrath;" because naturally, as we are born, and before we are renewed by grace, we have no such principle of godliness, for which we are most justly condemned, since an evil disposition is more criminal

than single evil acts. This is admitted in the discipline of a wise parent, who does not so much punish his child for a separate fault, as endeavor to correct the child's evil tendencies or disposition, by the inculcation of opposite principles. This corrupt tendency, which the Scriptures assert belong to all mankind, is the root of all sin in us; and as the holy principle was lost by our first parent Adam, by the commission of his first sin, and so is wanting in all his descendants, our natural depravity, our tendency to sin, is called by theologians *original sin*, a term not found in Scripture but justified by Scripture: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It is original sin in a double sense: because it came from the first sin of the first man, and because it is the source (*fons et origo*) of all our sins. When, therefore, we speak of "the forgiveness of sins," we suppose the forgiveness to extend not only to our actual sins of omission and commission, but also to our original sin, the corruption of our whole nature. Thus, the Catechism bids us say that we believe "God will no more remember our sins and our corrupt nature."

"Forgiveness" is an English word, compounded of *give* and the prefix *for*, which has the sense of *from*, implying separation,* as in for-sake, for-get, for-bear. In our English version it translates two words: one meaning a loosing from (*ἀπολύω*, Luke vi. 27), the other a taking away (*ἀφαισις*, from *ἀφίημι*, in very many places). So that our translators are nicely accurate in this term also. Our Catechism makes us say that

* Sometimes *for* is contracted from *fore*, — forwards; sometimes intensity from German *ver*, — forlorn.

"God will no more remember my sins nor my corrupt nature"; which language is justified by the prophet Jeremiah, xxxi. 34: "Saith the Lord, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Not that God, strictly speaking, ever forgets, but he acts towards those whom he forgives as though their sins were forgotten. He separates their sins from them.

The fact of the sin having been committed is not destroyed. That is impossible. Nothing can change or destroy the past. It must ever remain true that sin was committed. It is true of all the saints in glory that they were once sinners by nature and practice, and it must ever remain known to God's all-present mind that we have sinned against him.

The wickedness of the sin is not taken away. Nothing can reconcile wrong and right. What is wrong once must be wrong always, for right is unchangeable as God himself.

Nor can the demerit or punishment due to sin be taken away. It is the rule of eternal order, the demand of eternal justice, that punishment should follow violation of law. This axiom lies deeper than in the nature of things; it is in the nature of the infinitely perfect God. So Seneca truly says, that in a perfect government crime can never be forgiven, because forgiveness is inconsistent with justice. The sin must be expiated before the sinner can go free. The punishment due to his sin must be in some manner carried to execution before he can be treated as though he had never sinned.

But "forgiveness" does mean that the sinner is set free from his personal obnoxiousness to punishment (or

guilt), or that the just consequence of his sins is taken away from him because that consequence, or guilt, or punishment, has been borne and satisfied in some way consistent with divine justice, though not by him. This method, as we shall hereafter learn more particularly, is, by the substitution of Christ, to satisfy the law, in the place of the sinner who believes on his name. In other words, his sin is punished and the law takes its course, but in Christ and on Christ's person, not in and on the penitent believer. Thus we say after the Catechism, not that God forgives us without reason, or arbitrarily, (for that were a violation of justice and truth,) but "that God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins nor my corrupt nature," "but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God." The forgiveness is every way consistent with justice, because it is on account of satisfaction rendered and righteousness imputed. This will be farther treated of under our third head.

SECONDLY: *The author of forgiveness.*

It is God only. "I, even I, that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." Is. xliii. 25.

It can be God only, for it is against him that the sin has been committed. All wrong is wrong against God, for all our duty is to him. We may wrong our fellow-creatures, and they may forgive us; but their forgiveness does not free us from the guilt of having sinned against God in wronging them. Thus David, after his worst and very complicated crimes, in which he had most foully wronged and murdered one whom as his subject he was bound to protect and honor, exclaims to

God: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." So Joseph, faithful in the midst of temptation, asks: "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Hence God has enjoined upon us forgiveness to those who have injured us, because punishment, and therefore remittal of punishment, is his alone. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." "Who," then, "can forgive sins, but God only?"

As forgiveness can be extended only for the sake of satisfaction rendered, God only can forgive, for he only can determine the sufficiency of the satisfaction, or whether, if it be sufficient, it shall be accepted. It is a matter of free grace on his part, if he release the sinner from punishment for any reason.

So, also, he alone can forgive, because he alone could devise and execute a plan by which his mercy to the sinner may be justified. Such, in his estimation, is the enormity of sin,—such its extreme guiltiness,—that he has declared its desert to be eternal punishment; and he never remits sin except for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, his coequal Son in our nature. No such atonement could ever have been provided except by him alone. Therefore, as God in his mercy and wisdom and power has provided the only method by which sin can be forgiven, he only is the author of forgiveness; and the mercy of the forgiveness lies in the provision and application to the sinner of the justifying righteousness. It is mercy, but mercy through justice; the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Thus we come to,

THIRDLY: *The means of forgiveness.*

This the Catechism declares to be "Christ's satis-

faction," — "the imputation of the righteousness of Christ."

We have already seen that no sin of ours can go unpunished, and that the guiltiness of sin is so great that we can never satisfy the penalty ourselves, but that, if not forgiven, we must suffer on eternally. It follows, therefore, that the sinner cannot be pardoned except the divine justice accept a sufficient righteousness presented by another on his behalf. If he may not satisfy the law of God by a substitute, he must die. The Scripture is explicit and decisive on this point. God will by no means clear the guilty. If we continue guilty we must die; and except that guilt can be taken off from us by another, our guilt is perpetual.

But will God accept such a vicarious satisfaction? If so, has such a satisfaction been provided? If so, how may we avail ourselves of its advantage?

Will God accept such a satisfaction? Will the substitution of a vicarious righteousness justify his forgiveness of the actual sinner? The best answer to these questions is, that he has done so. He, the original of all law and justice, has declared that, for the sake of Christ's righteousness, he is justified in pardoning all who will accept of mercy through Christ; and this was the purpose for which he sent Christ into the world to obey, to suffer, and to die. Thus the apostle (Rom. iii. 19-26): "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" *i. e.* salvation by our own works is impossible. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness which is of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference; for all

have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." This plainly teaches us, that God has provided a redemption in the work of Christ, as the justification of the believing sinner, and that he does pardon every sinner who believes, for the sake of what Christ has accomplished. That which God has done and promises to do must be right.

But we may state reasons for this acceptance of a substituted righteousness: God had already dealt with us because of our representation by another. However our involvement with Adam, the head of our race and the first sinner, may be stated by different interpreters of the scriptural declarations on the subject, it cannot be denied that we do suffer in consequence of Adam's fall. The ground cursed for his sake is still cursed to us; still the price of man's bread is the sweat of his face; nor is there one of all the human family, the circumstances of whose birth, the mortality of whose frame, the sorrows of whose life, do not prove that death has come upon him by an unbroken entail from his first parents. If we suffer for the sins of another, may we not be saved by another's righteousness? The principle of representation or substitution is traceable through all the interlinking relations of man with man. It is a law of our nature. Besides, as was observed in a former lecture, what is the end of punishment? Certainly not the destruction of the transgressor, but the

vindication of the law, that its majesty may be maintained and others be deterred from following his example. If, then, the law of God may be so magnified and its truth be vindicated by the substitution of another to bear the penalty, the substitute may be accepted and the sinner set free. How completely has this been done by the vicarious work and passion of Christ? How clearly do they show God's estimate of sin and of righteousness? The sufferings of Christ had in them more proof of divine wrath against sin, more expiatory virtue, more honor to the law, more warning of God's certain condemnation of the impenitent, than the aggregate sufferings of the whole human family. The merit of Christ's active obedience was greater than the aggregate obedience of a thousand races like ours. The law of God, therefore, receives far greater majesty by the pardon of the sinner through the righteousness of Christ. God remains infinitely just, yet becomes infinitely merciful towards the sinner represented by Christ.

Such a satisfaction has been made. Behold the wisdom and the grace of God! His own coequal Son, who being no creature is no servant, makes the satisfaction. The sinner is man: the law broken was the law given to be obeyed by man on earth; the penalty was the death of man; and so the only begotten of God assumes to his infinite divinity the nature of man, — puts himself under the law given to us, obeys it in his life upon earth, suffers our penalty in his death on the cross, making the merit of his obedience and suffering in our nature infinite by his divinity, as the altar sanctifying the sacrifice. This is not a theory of a theological school. It is the truth, wellnigh the language of Scripture: "When the fulness of time

was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He took our place that we might be admitted to his. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The work was accomplished; for, says the apostle: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

What is the method by which this satisfaction advantages us?

The answer of our instructor is: By *Imputation*; which is synonymous with the phrase in the former part of the paragraph: "for the sake of Christ's satisfaction." For what is the meaning of imputation? Not that by the imputation of sins to Christ he becomes a sinner, or our sins become his sins; or that by the imputation of his righteous acts to the sinner he becomes actually innocent, or Christ's acts his acts. In no sense are, or can be, personal acts transferable. But the legal consequences of the acts are transferred by imputation: Christ suffered for our sins; we are saved and accepted on account of his righteousness. Whenever, therefore, the sinner believes in Christ, — that is, accepts and relies upon Christ's suretyship, — he is justified before God, because Christ's righteousness is imputed to him. So says the Psalmist: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity;" which is equivalent to the former part of the parallelism: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." And again, "Abraham believed God and it was accounted (*i. e.* imputed) unto him for righteousness."

FOURTHLY: *The extent of this forgiveness.*

Here the Catechism bids us say, that "God will no more remember my sins nor my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long . . . that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God."

It is the forgiveness of all the believer's sins. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." There is no exception or reserve made, and, therefore, all the sins of the Christian are blotted out. Not only the sins which he has committed, but all the sins which his "corrupt nature," notwithstanding his struggles against it, may cause him to commit. This is necessary to salvation. For the sanctification of the sinner, though begun at the moment he believes, is not complete until his admission to glory. If, therefore, the pardon extends only to sins committed before conversion, or, as some have heretically contended, before baptism, the penitent will certainly, because of his remaining weakness, fall into fresh condemnation from which there is no salvation. But, blessed be his name! God pardons our whole sinful nature, and therefore all the sins which, despite of our faith, yet imperfect, come from it; so that he who truly believes can never in any sense "be condemned before the tribunal of God." His acquittal is complete, his justification is established, his salvation is sure; that acquittal is not because of his own work, nor can be defeated by his sins, but is for the sake of the perfect and all-sufficient righteousness of Christ.

Nor let any say that this doctrine leads to licentiousness in giving immunity to the sinner. Mark the careful language of the Catechism: we must "struggle

all our lives long" against this "corrupt nature." It is an essential quality of true faith, saving faith, that it "works by love," "purifies the heart," and "overcomes the world." If, therefore, we do not struggle against our "corrupt nature," we have no faith, and are not covered by Christ's merits. If we wilfully and obstinately sin on, we have no evidence of pardon, but of the reverse. None ever accepted Christ as a Saviour from punishment, who did not accept him as a Saviour from the power of sin. Nay, the seal of the believer's acceptance with God is the stamp of Christ's likeness on his heart by the Holy Spirit, and the sanctifying grace of the Spirit is the only sure earnest of perfect salvation amidst the holiness of heaven. It is by this Spirit within him by which he struggles against his "corrupt nature."

God does, indeed, chasten the believer, but chastisement is not punishment; on the contrary, it is a proof of the Father's adopting love. So, if "we are, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, sorry for (our sinful) weaknesses, and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God, he may rest assured that no sin or infirmity, which still remaineth against our will in us, can hinder us from being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of the heavenly meat and drink." For thus says the apostle: "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Such, brethren, is the scriptural doctrine of forgiveness. God grant us the experience of it in our own souls.

LECTURE XXVII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

TWENTY-SECOND LORD'S DAY.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

QUEST. LVII. *What comfort doth the resurrection of the body afford thee?*

ANS. That not only my soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head; but also that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like to the glorious body of Christ.

QUEST. LVIII. *What comfort takest thou from the article of "life everlasting"?*

ANS. That, since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, after this life I shall inherit perfect salvation, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, and that to praise God therein forever.

EVERY careful reader of Scripture must be struck with the prominence given to the doctrine of the resurrection in the New Testament. Our blessed Lord taught it plainly in several emphatic passages, as when he said: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day;" and when he comforted Martha at the grave of her brother: "Thy brother shall rise again. . . . I am the resurrection and the life;" and, more particularly, when he told the cavilling Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they

that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." All the apostles treat of it as not merely a pleasing expectation, but a radical truth of Christianity. They taught it to the multitudes of the Pentecost; for we find that the Sadducees were especially grieved because they "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." So Paul was mocked at by the Athenians, because "he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection"; and, in defending himself before Felix, he professed that he believed "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets, and had hope towards God (which the Jews also allowed) that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." He lays a like stress upon it in his epistles; as in Romans, where he speaks of "waiting for the adoption, even the redemption, of the body"; and in that noble chapter, the xvth of 1st Corinthians, where, having demonstrated and expounded it at great length, he adds, as the proper practical inference: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as your labor is not in vain in the Lord." So the other apostles united in carrying the faith of the churches forward to the grand consummation of the evangelical system, "the restitution of all things," when the bodies of Christ's saints would be fashioned "like unto his glorious body." Indeed, such courage and comfort had the early believers from this article of our creed, that they exulted amidst the tortures of martyrdom; and their persecutors, on one occasion, burnt even the bones of those that had been slain for Christ, and scattered their ashes on the waters of a rapid stream,* in vain

* The Rhone. Eusebius, l. 1, c. 1.

attempt to take away the sublime hope from the surviving confessors.

Most gladly, therefore, should we avail ourselves of the opportunity and help afforded us by the lesson of to-day, in harmony with Scripture, to study this cardinal doctrine as fully as our time will permit.

Let us remember, however, first, that the resurrection of the body is purely a doctrine of divine Scripture. There is no trace of its ever having been held by any man who had not the aid of revelation. Many of the ancients, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, had hopes, by no means clear or well assured, of the soul's immortality, but the resurrection of the body was not dreamed of by any philosophical sect; and when proclaimed by "the gospel," which "brought life and immortality to light," it was received with ridicule on every side. We have seen that the Athenians mocked at it, and thought that "Jesus and the resurrection," which Paul preached on Mars Hill, were two "strange" or new "gods." Pliny, the celebrated naturalist, and foremost among the Latin writers on science, who flourished about the time that Paul preached at Rome, and probably was not wholly ignorant of this Christian belief, holds language most extraordinary: "The chief comfort man hath for his imperfections in nature is this, that even God is not omnipotent; and some things are beyond his reach. For neither is he able to work his own death, were he never so desirous of it, as man can do when he is tired of life (the best gift bestowed on him amidst so many miseries); neither can he endow man with immortality (everlasting life), nor yet recall, raise, and revive those that are once departed and dead."* Celsus, the bitter reviler of Christianity,

* Nat. Hist. b. 1, c. vii.

laughs at it as "a hope of worms, a filthy and disgusting thing, which God neither can nor will bring to pass." Julian, notorious as the Apostate, an elegant writer, and of no mean rank as a philosopher, in his frequent attacks upon Christianity, shows more spleen against this doctrine than any other. Justin Martyr sums up his argument on the resurrection (a fragment of which has reached us) in words like these: "We see that our blessed Saviour throughout all the gospel declares the salvation of our flesh. Why, then, do we hearken to the pernicious maxims of infidels, who impudently swerve from the truth by owning that the soul only is immortal and incorruptible, but the body corruptible and perishable. This we learned from Plato and Pythagoras before we knew the truth. If our Saviour has taught us no more than this, he has taught us nothing more than those philosophers. But he has made a new and wonderful revelation to mankind; for, truly, new and wonderful it is for God to promise, not only to preserve that which is incorruptible in incorruption, but to bestow also incorruption on that which is corruptible." It is, therefore, to the word of God alone that we must go for our "lively hope," humbly employing our reason to follow and acknowledge the wisdom from on high; for, though it was beyond the power of reason to discover the resurrection, it is fully within the province of that faculty to perceive and comprehend the truth of it.

Let us take for our discussion the very natural order suggested by the answer to the 57th Question.

It speaks of what occurs "after this life"; that is, after what is commonly called death, when the soul is separated from the body. Now we ask,

FIRST: *What becomes of the soul?*

SECONDLY: *What becomes of the body?*

THIRDLY: *What will be the final state of both body and soul?*

FIRST: *What becomes of the soul "after this life"?*

1. It does not *perish*. It must continue to exist, because after death is the judgment; and exist forever, because from the judgment "the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." The words *everlasting* and *eternal* mean precisely the same, and translate one Greek word, so that if the righteous will be rewarded eternally, the wicked will be punished eternally; the souls of both, the wicked and the righteous, are imperishable; for, though the term "life" is put for the blessedness of the righteous, it does not follow that the punishment of the wicked is annihilation (which, indeed, would be the negation of punishment), since many Scriptures show, especially the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that the wicked are conscious sufferers in a place of torment. Indeed, the whole Scripture declares this life to be a preparation for eternity, the seed-time of an everlasting harvest, the results corresponding to our actions here.

2. The soul does not *sleep* until the resurrection, as some fanciful heretics have contended, for the parable just cited shows the contrary. Many Scriptures speak of the departed believer as in bliss: the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews places "the spirits of just men made perfect" among the "innumerable" angels in "the heavenly Jerusalem"; and Paul counted it better "to depart and be with Christ," — which he would not have thought if he knew that he was to be dormant on his leaving the scene of his great usefulness, as in

such case he would have preferred to remain. It is the body of the Christian that sleeps in Jesus, not the ever active, sensible soul.

3. Neither does the soul pass into another *preparatory* state, such as that the papists call *purgatory*. For, as to any purgatorial purification by fire, the notion is flatly contradicted by the apostolical doctrine that "the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin," and that after Christ's passion "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Nay, if such purification by fire be necessary, why do they pray and offer masses for the souls of the dead? We would not have them enter heaven unpurified, and neither prayers nor masses can take the place of fire.

4. Nor does *the soul go into any other state* (sometimes called "intermediate") than heaven or hell, where it remains until the resurrection. For, in the first place, (as was shown in the lecture on Christ's "Descent into Hell,")* the Scripture does not speak of such a place.

Nor is such a place necessary. Heaven is the abode of blessed spirits, and hell of lost spirits; and there is no unfitness in a disincorporated soul for such an abode. Besides, what is a spirit? Does a spirit occupy space? Is heaven or hell an extent of space? These are questions not readily answered, on which the most ingenious minds have pondered without satisfaction. But we know that heaven is a *state* of happiness, hell a *state* of misery. Is the happiness of the justified soul, which lies in the enjoyment of God, so different from that of the holy angels, that they cannot enjoy heaven together? May not a miserable soul be miserable in hell? Christ has gone to heaven, and, therefore, when

* Which see, Vol. I. p. 395.

a Christian departs to be with Christ, he must go at once to heaven; while the wicked depart, accursed, "into the * everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Hence the Catechism makes the believer confidently say, "My soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head."

SECONDLY: *What will become of the body after death?*

The Catechism bids each of us answer: "This, my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ."

Here we should note an unfortunate error in our translation of the Catechism, which is also found in the common English version of the creed. In all other versions of the creed, whatever be the language, it is "the resurrection of the *flesh*," not "of the *body*." The variation is to be lamented, as it defeats one design of the article, which was to assert the resurrection of our self-same bodies, in opposition to such heretics as, following Origen, contended that at the resurrection we shall receive phantasms or unsubstantial semblances of our present bodies, or forms in some way not the same. Our Catechism, in its original German, and also in the Dutch translation, preserves the word *flesh*; † and, in the answer before us, it is, "This my *flesh*"; so the error is inexcusable.

I. The body after death is dissolved according to the original sentence: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This we know by too painful experience. What process the bodies of the wicked will go

* The article is definite.

† *Mijn vleesch*. Ger., *mein fleisch*.

through while in dissolution, we are not told, though, doubtless, it will be a preparation for their endurance of punishment; but we have good reason to believe, that, during their long sleep in the grave, the bodies of the righteous will be purified from the corrupt accidents of their present mortality, and prepared for the "exceeding weight of glory" which shall come upon them at the resurrection.

II. For the body will be raised again at the last day.

The Catechism confines its answer to the resurrection of the believer, but as the article itself contemplates the resurrection in general, we shall make that our subject.

1. As to the *fact* of the resurrection, the believer of Scripture can have no doubt. We have already seen how prominent a doctrine of the New Testament it is, and we trace it from the beginning of the Old, the light increasing until the coming of him who is "the Life." The antediluvian world saw the bodies of men crumble into dust, but the translation of Enoch, body and soul, to God, proved that the whole nature of man was destined for immortality. Job, whose history is the most ancient of the sacred books, knew that his "Redeemer lived, . . . and that, though after his skin worms destroy his body, in his 'flesh' he should see God." The miracle of Enoch was repeated for the Jews under the law, by the translation of Elijah; besides which, there were several instances of actual resuscitation from death, as of the Shunamite's child, the child of the widow of Sarepta, the dead man whose corpse touched the bones of Elisha, — and, perhaps, others. (See Hebrews xi. 35.) David avows the same glorious hope, when he says: "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;" and again:

"I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Isaiah prophesies of the uprising of the saints through the victory of Christ over the grave: "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dead is as the dead of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Daniel is very explicit: "Many (*i. e.* the multitude) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." But the great proof is the resurrection of our Lord himself, as "the first-fruits of them that sleep"; whence he called himself "the resurrection and the life." The whole gospel turns on that cardinal fact as opening the kingdom of heaven; so the apostle says: "If there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen; but if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

2. The *reason* for the resurrection.

Omitting several minor arguments which have not a little force, we go at once to the main reason: The justice of God in distributing rewards and punishments. When God was proceeding to the creation of man, he said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and so he "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," or person. What the "image of God" was, it is not necessary now to determine; but we must believe that the man thus created consisted both of body and soul. His rational soul was not *all* of his humanity, but his *flesh* also was *essential* to it. Nay, his spirit, unlike that of an angel, was specially fitted to inhabit a body, and act through it and with it. Not

that it cannot live and act when separate from the body, but that a union with the body is necessary to the completeness of its vigor and action. In a word, the man is not entire without body as well as soul. This is proved by the fact, that, when it pleased our adorable Lord to become man, or assume to his divinity our humanity, he took to himself not only a reasonable soul, but also a true body, "flesh and blood" like ours. All the dealings of God in the government of man had reference, therefore, to *man thus compounded of body and soul*. The rewards of life and the penalties of disobedience were proposed to man thus constituted, and not to him as a spirit only. It is true, that, as the body, when separate from the spirit, is not conscious or reasonable, it cannot be the subject of moral dealing except as it is connected with the soul. But it does not follow that God may not reach the soul with blessing or misery through the body, as, indeed, we know from our daily experience. For there are not a few exquisite pleasures, as well as pains, derived by the soul through our corporeal senses, and appetites, and faculties, and sensations. So also there are important duties, as well as gross crimes, which the soul cannot act out except through the body. It is, therefore, obviously fitting that man's punishment or reward should be visited on both his soul and body. Not that the soul cannot suffer or enjoy without the body, but it cannot so much as when in the body. The man, that is the whole man, — man as he was created, man as he lives and acts in his present sphere, — must be the subject of God's full judicial dealing.

The facts of the case show this. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," was the threaten-

ing of penalty, implying the opposite reward of opposite obedience. Man sinned, and instantly the favor of God, which is life, was taken from the soul, and the body through its lusts and pains became at once its tempter and its tormentor. The death which, unless averted by the grace of Christ, is eternal, passed upon both body and soul. So, also, we find that when Christ undertook to expiate our guilt, by bearing our punishment, he suffered both in body and soul; for, being the substitute of man, he suffered as man; and, also, when his satisfaction was complete, he was rewarded with glory in heaven, ascending body and soul to the right hand of the Father. It follows inevitably, that those covered by his suretyship were redeemed both body and soul; not only their souls made heirs of heavenly blessedness, but their bodies also destined to be made like his own; while, on the other hand, death must have its eternal effect on both the bodies and souls of those out of Christ.

Thus the truth of God, neither in his threatenings nor his promises, can be fulfilled, if the soul alone is to exist forever, since the soul is not the man, and cannot alone enjoy the rewards or suffer the penalties which the man deserves. It may be said that in reality (the body without the soul being not conscious) it is the soul which enjoys or suffers, but the body certainly enhances either sensibility. God is omnipotent, and could make the soul independent of this relation; but in doing so he would change the nature of his creature so as to take from him his full humanity, which lies, not in his soul or in his body, but in the union of both. If the soul of the sinner exist forever to suffer eternal death, the body of the sinner must exist forever to suf-

fer eternal death; if the soul of the believer shall exist forever to enjoy eternal life, so must his body; in a word, the whole man must exist forever. Since, however, the body on the soul's leaving it does dissolve, we must believe that it is not annihilated, but will be raised again for the vindication of God's infallible word.

If it be asked why the organization of the body is suspended between the time of the soul's departure until the last day, and not cast at once into heaven or hell,—we answer, that such a disposition of it is evidently a part of that providential economy consequent of the mediatorial system in Christ, which began in our world with the first promise, and will terminate after the judgment. It is for Christ's sake that we are spared to live in this world at all; and there are obviously many moral uses of natural death, intended for us to take advantage of, which could not appear, so far as we can see, were man removed at once body and soul out of the world. But when all these temporary ends shall have been reached, that justice of God, which Christ came to magnify and execute (for he is the judge of the world), requires that the bodies of the dead shall be raised, and the whole man receive the award of endless life or endless death. So the resurrection of Christ proves the final resurrection of all men. He, the mediatorial man, was raised from the dead that he might complete his mediatorial office, the consummation of which is the judgment of all men; and at his coming the trump of the archangel will raise the dead to stand before him for doom or bliss.

3. The *manner* of the Resurrection.

a. It will be accomplished by the power of God. The texts in proof of this are so many and so direct,

that we need hardly cite them. The reassembling and organizing and animating of the human body are equal to its creation; and therefore the sacred writers dream not of any other foundation for their belief in a future resurrection than the word and almightiness of God. "Why," asks the apostle, "should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" That God has undertaken it is answer enough to all questions of its possibility. It is, however, worthy of remark, that, though according to the usage of Scripture when referring to the main acts of the mediatorial system, the resurrection of the body is attributed to each of the three persons of the Trinity (to the Father, Rom. vi. 4; to the Son, John xi. 25; to the Holy Ghost, Ephes. i. 20; Rom. i. 4), yet, like every other vitalizing prerogative, it is especially attributed to Christ as the mediator, or to the Holy Ghost, as his Spirit. It was part of his viceregal office to bestow life or inflict death upon those put under his authority, that, as he will be the judge, so he may be the executor of his own decisions. Thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." The authority to judge men and the power to raise them from the dead go together.

b. So, for the same reason, the *time* of the general resurrection will be the end of the world. We are careful to say *general* resurrection, because there have been, and possibly may be, particular instances of resurrection as proofs or preliminary samples of the great revival. It will be immediately previous to the final judgment, and when the execution of the mediatorial work is about closing. "I will raise him up," said our Lord, "at the last day." So the apostle: "At the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible;" while they which "shall remain," that is, be alive at the time (all of whom, we have reason for believing, will be just), "shall be changed," and "caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (compare 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Again, the apostle (1 Cor. xv. 24) having spoken of the resurrection, says: "Then cometh the end, when he" (that is, the mediator) "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Thus we see that the resurrection of neither the righteous nor the wicked can take place until the *end* of the mediatorial kingdom.

c. The resurrection will be *universal*. This has been shown by each step of the previous argument. "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." So the apostle, in the Revelation, "saw the dead both small and great stand before God." It cannot be otherwise, as then the judgment would be neither universal nor complete. No objection to this can be taken from the silence of the apostle in the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, respecting the resurrection of the wicked, as there he is treating specially of the victory over death vouchsafed to the righteous in Christ.

d. The *order* of the resurrection is, at least, suggested by the apostle, when he says: "Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming." It is thus probable that the resurrection of the wicked will follow that of the righteous; especially, as all the texts which speak of them both put the righteous first. If, however, the righteous have not the precedence, the resurrection of both will be simultaneous at the last day. There are those, however, who think that they discover in Scripture a coming of our Lord (in person) and a resurrection of the righteous previously to the end of Christ's kingdom; and they cite in proof of their opinion a remarkable passage in the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the twentieth of Revelation: "I saw thrones and they that sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls" [or persons] "of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received the mark of the beast upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and his Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." That there is difficulty in reconciling this paragraph with other Scriptures, cannot with candor be denied; and if this were the only place where the resurrection was spoken of, or rather were there none declaring the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, we might infer that the martyred con-

fessors of the truth against the beast (for none others are named) were raised, and reigned with Christ for a period described as a thousand years in heaven, since it is not said that they reigned on earth. Yet then we should be troubled at the assertion that over them "the second death hath no power," since that would imply that all who were not martyred for resisting the beast were liable to suffer from the second death, which cannot be true of Christ's other most numerous people. No ingenuity, however, can rescue this passage from being highly figurative. The reference to the *key* and the *chain*, in the first verse, cannot be taken literally, and our ready inference is, that there is a mystical meaning here which the fulfilment of prophecy will make plain. The whole book of the Revelation is full of such mysticisms, and, though we catch glimpses of the truth from our knowledge of other Scriptures, no one has yet interpreted its prophecy, spiritually or literally, to the satisfaction of the evangelical church. Yet Scripture must be consistent with Scripture; and if we cannot open the meaning of this passage, we can at least be sure that the Scriptures which literally and plainly declare the time of Christ's coming to judgment to be the time of the general resurrection speak absolute truth. So that it were not wise to give up the doctrine of texts which all unite in saying must be taken literally, to follow a doubtful interpretation of a few verses in the most mystical book of the whole Bible. All should agree that the plain text should be the standard of interpretation, not the mystical. It is not consistent with our present duty to enter upon questions urged by those who adopt the notion of Christ's personal reign for a thousand

years on earth before he comes to judge the world; it is enough for us now that the concurrent testimony of many Scriptures assert the resurrection of all the righteous and the wicked at the last day. For what saith Job? "Man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of sleep." And what becomes of our Lord's own words? "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall live," — manifestly all at the one and the same hour of which he speaks. The particular instances of resurrection, which have from time to time occurred for special reasons of providence, do not impair the general fact; but the uprising of such a *multitude* as the martyrs slain under the fury of the beast would deny it.

The change in the bodies of those who shall be alive at Christ's coming with the last trump will be simultaneous with the resurrection of the dead, being for the same purpose.

e. Our *identical bodies* will be raised; else would it not be a resurrection but a new creation, which would defeat the end of the resurrection. The Saviour's identical body was raised, so shall ours be; for the one fact is inseparable from the other. According to Scripture, "*our bodies*," "*our vile bodies*," "*our mortal bodies*," are to be "*quickened*," "*changed*," "*raised*." So says the apostle: "*it is sown*," "*it is raised*." The self-same thing that is sown will be raised. "In my flesh," says Job, "I shall see God." Our Catechism is decided on this point: "This my body (or flesh), being raised, shall be reunited to my soul;" and so say the confessions of all orthodox or evangelical churches. How else can it be true that

all that are in the graves shall come forth; and those that sleep in the dust shall awake: how that the *dead* shall be raised? The deadness is not predicated of the soul, and it cannot be of a new body. How does the believer triumph over the grave, when it retains its hold of his true body? An ancient doctor of the church truly says, that, to pretend to a belief in a resurrection with any other sense, is "a trick of words." And Josephus (in a fragment imputed to him) remarks, as the belief of the Jews, that "the resurrection is not a migration of the soul from one body into another, but a raising up of the very same body." Some have denied this. They say that the body is "changed." But change does not imply substitution, unless when a thing is said to be changed for another, which is not so in this case. Our Lord's body was "changed" on Tabor. The heart is "changed" by the regeneration. Change does not destroy identicalness, but only transforms to another fashion or appearance. Again, they say: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" but the very next phrase shows that it is corrupt flesh and blood: "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." The corruptibleness must be taken away from the body, hence the necessity of the change: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal, immortality." The soul is neither corruptible nor mortal; it must, therefore, be the body, now corruptible and mortal, which shall put on incorruption and immortality.

But the chief difficulty is as to the preservation of the body's identity after its particles have been scattered, and many of them, it may be, made constituent particles of other bodies; and sceptics go the length

of asserting that it is impossible in the nature of things. But let them first define what identity is, and show wherein it lies. So far as we can see, that which constitutes the identicalness of the body need not, and we believe will not, be lost. Our bodies are continually undergoing changes as to their particles; some, indeed, say that these are entirely changed in the course of years; yet are they not the same? Is not the body of a man of fourscore the same, or identical with that which he was born with? Is not the mighty oak, waving his branches over a wide space, identical with the little shoot that a hundred years ago peeped out of the acorn? nay, with the germ in the acorn itself? What, then, constitutes the actual essence of the body, and what its mere accidents? The accidents change, we know; but does the substantial essence change? If a man loses an arm, is his body not the same? If he loses eyes, ears, limbs, every part that he can lose without losing life, is he not the same man, and his body the same? The truth is, neither identicalness nor substance have ever been defined; and it is absurd to object undefinable terms to a plain fact of Scripture. The Jews, and the Mohammedans after them, have thought that the identity of the body lay in a certain indestructible portion of it,* a germ or nucleus around which the accidental particles of the body were agglomerated; and which will be the germ or nucleus of the new body at the resurrection. The ingenious Drew, and some other eminent moderns, incline to the same opinion. This is, perhaps, unnecessary; yet, when we know how the future form of the plant is

* This the Jews called the bone, *Liet* (separation?) and it corresponds to the *os coccygis*, or cuckoobill-shaped termination of the *sacrum*.

hidden in its tiny seed, or of the animal in the egg, we can see how very possible it is that from a very small portion of the former body may be evolved the resurrection body. In fact, there are processes every hour in nature showing exactly the Almighty skill and power which is required for the miracle of the resurrection. It is sufficient for us to be told that the body will be raised by the power of God. He will take care that its identicalness will be preserved, and that nothing will stand in the way of his purpose. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?"

f. Our bodies will be *changed*. The apostle (1 Cor. xv. 35, 44) illustrates this by the ordinary process of vegetation. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Properly, the germ does not die, but the husk, and other substance of the seed about it, corrupts and forms, as it were, the manure for the vital particle. So, "thou sowest not that body which shall be," — *i. e.* you do not put into the ground the stalk with its leaves and head, — "but bare" or naked "grain," or seed; "but God," after it has been sown and has germinated, "gives it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed its own body." That is, according to the arrangements he has prescribed for himself, each different kind of seed produces its peculiar plant. A grain of rye does not produce a wheat-stalk, or a grain of wheat a barley-stalk. "So also is the resurrection of the dead." The body sown in the grave will produce its kind, or, rather, by the power of God, reproduce itself, but in a more enduring form. The transformation of the wicked is not described; but that of the righteous is depicted at length in the aforesaid

chapter of Corinthians, and elsewhere. The key to the whole, as stated by the Catechism, is to be found in the fact that the body of the believer shall be "made like unto the glorious body of Christ." "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." The body of the redeemed will be like the body which Christ now has glorified on the throne of heaven. His body was planted in the grave, wounded, dishonored, lifeless; it was raised from the grave to immortal glory. As is the first-fruits, "so shall be" all "that are Christ's at his coming." What his body was to be in glory, the Lord showed to the three apostolical witnesses when they beheld him transfigured in glory on the top of the holy mount Tabor; to which Peter and John always refer when they speak of having "beheld his glory." So again the apostle Paul: "As we have borne the image of the earthy (the first Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (the second Adam)." The celestial body will differ from the terrestrial body correspondingly as the sphere of its celestial activity differs from that of its terrestrial life. Christ was like us in all points except sin, and, because he had no sin, and because he had expiated sin, his body "did not see corruption;" but in every other respect we shall be changed from what we are to what he is. So the apostle: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Let us resume these particulars: "It is raised in incorruption." The curse of sin being taken away, and the body fully purged of its mortal tendencies, shall never more know pain or sickness or decay, but shall live immortally pure and fresh. "It is raised in glory." Death is a dishonor, the proof of cursedness; but glory, the full presence, favor, and light of God, will be the portion of his children ransomed from shame by the merit of Christ. "It is raised in power." All its former weakness shall be left behind in the grave, and in their place it shall be endowed with untiring vigor and a divine energy. "It is raised a spiritual body." The phrase is at first sight contradictory of itself. Spirit seems to be the opposite of matter. Yet the body continues substantial while it becomes spiritual. The apostle's meaning, however, evidently is, that, losing the grossness which it has by our present nature, it partakes, in ethereality and purity, of spirit. As in the transfiguration of Christ the Divine Spirit within him shone through his physical frame, pervading it with heavenly lustre, and making it like itself in a common glory, so the body of the believer, no longer a prison-house, hindering, oppressing, and animalizing the soul, shall be permeated, filled in every part, and beaming outwardly with the Godlike Spirit.

For, consider how this body will be derived: not from physical generation, but from the immediate power of God. How it will be sustained: not by food and drink, but the immediate favor of God. How it will be employed: not in labor, as here, consequent upon its natural necessities, but in the holy service of God. Hence the nature of the spiritual change. They

"neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God, being the children of God." They "hunger no more, neither thirst any more." They are never weary, and "no night" curtains them from the resplendent moon. Their activity is perpetual, and they feed on the "angels' food" of divine truth and love and service, and they drink of the Holy Spirit, "the pure river of the water of life," flowing in perpetual tide from the throne of God and the Lamb. Swift as angels, strong as cherubs, ardent as seraphs, glorious as Christ, there shall be no bound to their action, no limit to their aspirations, no measure to their energy but the nature of God, in whom they "live and move and have their being."

If the bodies of the saints be fashioned after the body of Christ, after what fearfully opposite fashion shall be the bodies of the wicked? If everything be taken from the righteous that can hinder or annoy the jubilant soul, how must the flesh that has been abandoned to sin become the instrument of its own punishment!—strong, only to be more sensitive of pain; indestructible, only that its anguish may be eternal. We shrink now from the slightest bodily pain, and in extremity of suffering look to death as a relief; but no death blesses the damned immortal. See in the pains of men here the fruit of sin, in the diseases and deformities that follow intemperance and lust,—how vice reacts upon the transgressor; yet here God is long-suffering and waits to be gracious. What must that death, that pain, that disease be, which shall punish the sinner, when God withdraws his restraining hand and gives the retribution full sweep! O who among us can lie down in everlasting burning? "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!"

FIRST: The doctrine of the resurrection should fill the believer with lively joy. So it affected all the apostles. Then only do they enter upon the full fruition of eternal life, and obtain a perfect victory over sin and death and hell. We do believe that "the souls of the righteous at their death immediately pass into glory"; but the soul is not all of man, and his body is necessary to his completeness. We are forced to complain of the body now as a clog, a temptation, and a tormentor; but it is so only because it is a "body of sin and death." The body was intended as a servant and helpmate to the soul, to aid its perceptions, to minister to its pleasure, to act out its purposes. Man is thus more wonderful than the angel, and of larger and more varied sphere; for he unites in his own person the two grand departments of creation,—spirit and matter. He was formed to derive his happiness and his means of glorifying God from both. He can neither know God, nor serve him, nor enjoy him so well, without his body as he can with it, if sin and its effects be taken away. Therefore should we earnestly desire and long for that blessed day when our bodies shall again be made pure, more glorious than in their first creation, and safe in their spiritual youth forever. Like the apostle, we should pray for deliverance from the "body of sin and death"; but also, like him, "expect with uplifted head" the full restoration of our humanity to the image of God; as Paul says, after speaking of our transitory afflictions and the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory": "We know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle (*σκηνη*, tent, as of a pilgrim) were dissolved, we have a building (*οικοδομην*, an edifice, or permanent structure) of God (*ἐκ Θεοῦ*, from God), a house

not made with hands; eternal in the heavens; for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." So in another: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The resurrection completes the adoption, because only then the whole man is restored in blessing to his Father's heavenly house. Thanks! Thanks! "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" But oh! how careful should we be to preserve from shame and pollution here the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is destined to such glory hereafter!

What a glorious assembly will surround the throne of our once crucified but now exalted Redeemer! What a horrible crowd of sufferers there will be of those who served to the evil pleasures of the flesh!

Gather us, O God of love, with thy people. Amen!

The third head is included by the next article, "The Life Everlasting," and will be treated in our study of the 58th Question and Answer.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

TWENTY-SECOND LORD'S DAY.

THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

IN our last lecture, following the Catechism on what occurs to the believer "after this life," we proposed to inquire

FIRST: *What becomes of the soul?*

SECONDLY: *What becomes of the body?*

THIRDLY: *What will be the final state of both body and soul?*

The first and second inquiries we answered so far as God gave us help. It now remains for us to answer

THIRDLY: *What will be the final or eternal state of both body and soul?*

This we reserved for our discussion of the article of THE LIFE EVERLASTING, when his body and soul being inseparably reunited, the redeemed man shall be perfect and perfectly blessed.

A more delightful subject of pious meditation cannot be found in all the range of Christian truth. It fitly crowns the noble symbol of our holy catholic evangelical faith; for eternal life is the consummation of God's eternal purpose concerning his church, the great end for which he sent his only-begotten Son to be our Saviour, the full reward of the Redeemer's mediatorial work, the triumph of the Holy Ghost in sanctifying grace, and the entire satisfaction of the Christian's desiring hope. Yet should we not approach it rashly, but inquire of the holy oracle with reverent caution and humble faith; for our knowledge of things eternal and

heavenly must in this life be poor and weak, nor ought we to venture a single step beyond what is clearly revealed by him who inhabiteth eternity. All that it is profitable for us to know, he has taught us in his Word, and what he has not taught us, it is profane to guess. The apostle Paul had a miraculous vision of heaven, but declared that it was "not lawful for him to utter" what he there heard; and our Catechism cites his words, himself quoting from the prophet Isaiah (lxiv. 4): "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). We can now see only through a glass, mercifully shaded for our feeble sight, but the dim perception exceeds the brightest glory of earth and time. Indeed, were there no other proof that the Bible came from God, the description which it gives of the blessedness of heaven would be enough, so far does it transcend the loftiest achievements of human genius. Let us, then, take our stand on the Pisgah of promise, and strive to catch through the mists that hang over the stream of death some glimpses of Beulah, the beautiful land, and of the Jerusalem in the midst of it, where is our inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved" for those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." There Jesus the forerunner hath for us entered, and thither the light streaming down through the rent veil will guide all his people. The contemplation will, by the grace of the Spirit, increase our love to God, our zeal in his service, our patience under his discipline, and our strength for the honorable burdens of duty.

The Catechism (after Scripture) asserts of "the

life everlasting" three things, the order of which, for logical convenience, we may change:—

I. That it is the perfection of salvation, the fulness of which no mortal mind can comprehend.

"After this life, I shall inherit eternal salvation, which eye hath not seen," &c.

II. That a principal part of this blessedness will consist in glorifying God.

"And that to praise God therein forever."

III. That the Christian has the beginning of it in this world.

"I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy."

Before entering upon these heads, let us ascertain the Scriptural uses of the term "life," which are three: the vital principle; the duration of animated existence; the enjoyment of divine favor.

A. What the vital principle, or that which gives vigor to organized being, is, no skill of man has been able to define or discover. It seems as if the Author of life had thrown around it inscrutable mystery; but that there is a principle, without which the most perfect organization were inert, and losing which would dissolve, is evident; and this is called life. Life holds the organization together, and maintains in exercise its appropriate functions. Thus we read: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Hebrew, *lives*). The body, with all its wonderful anatomy complete, was formed out of dust; it was in appearance and reality a human body; but it was not a *living* body; the several parts of its exquisite machinery were still and insensible; there was no motive power, no pervading

energy, until God inspired it with life: then all began to act; the man was alive; he had become "a living soul," or person.* The breath was not the life, but life gave the power of breathing the air essential to its support, though it may be inferred that the inspiration of breath by the power of God gave the first impulse to the respiratory organs. Man became a living soul; but even should we believe that soul refers absolutely to the spiritual part of man's nature, which he, undoubtedly, at that moment received, we must not suppose that the soul was the animating principle, since other animals have corporeal life in common with man; nor can we discover any difference between animal life in man and in the brute. There was thus a life, not arising from the corporeal organization, but communicated subsequently to its having been formed out of the dust. The soul being infused at the same moment that the animal life was given, the man in his double nature, body and soul, was complete; but the animating principle, or life, was not either body or soul, nor was it consequent upon the union of the two, but something distinct from both; yet, according to the constitution of man, holding them together; so that should the life be withdrawn, the union of body and soul is dissolved, and the body returns to its dust. It follows that, if the force of life be in any degree impaired, the acting of the bodily functions must be correspondently hindered and disordered; so that weakness, pain, disease, and altogether the present tendency of our bodies to disso-

* This translation of the Hebrew term is justified by comparison of sacred Scriptures. See remarks on *Soul* in the lecture on the Descent into Hell. To suppose that the spiritual soul was the *breath of God* would be to adopt the theory of *emanation*, which is opposed to the Scripture doctrine of universal creation.

lution, prove the depravation of the animating principle, and that death, the opposite of life, has begun its work. Thus, when man sinned, the threatened sentence of death passed upon him. "In the day," the self-same day, "thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Adam lived (in common language) many years before his actual death, but from the moment of his sin he began to die. What we call death was the finishing of the mortal process. So has "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The resurrection of the bodies of all men immediately before the judgment shows that God, when creating man, intended him for a never-ending existence, body and soul; so that death as the punishment of sin cannot be annihilation, but must mean, as in the bodies of the wicked after the judgment, such a curse as turns its qualities and functions into sources of pain and misery; while, on the other hand, the eternal life which God bestows on the bodies of the righteous will be an indestructible, never-failing vigor, preserving it from all the ills that flesh is now heir to, in a perpetual youth, symmetry, and beauty, — nay, doubtless, continually and forever developing its pure properties and enhancing its genuine delights.

The soul, we are accustomed, and rightly, to consider an uncompounded spirit, that is, without any articulation of parts such as constitute the substantial body. Yet we have melancholy evidence that the soul may lose its healthfulness and justness of action, nay, become diseased and disordered; so that it is not pushing analogy too far if we believe that the soul, also, has a life other than its spiritual nature, — a life which God gives or restrains as in his holy will he chooses. When

that vital energy is in any degree withdrawn, the soul sickens, is disturbed, and wars against itself. This death is the penalty of sin, now operating in a partial manner, but after the judgment having its full effect on the conscious soul in unspeakable and utter anguish; so the eternal life, which will reign in the glorified spirit of the redeemed, will be a Godward energy, pervading all its faculties, affections, and dispositions with a holy strength and ever-increasing delight.

Nay, we discover in many passages of Scripture that there is a life peculiar to the moral being of man. The effect of sin is, clearly, to deprive us of power to do good. We were utterly "without strength," had not "Christ died for the ungodly." Our "whole head is sick, and" our "whole heart is faint." Hence, we are plainly told that Christ must give us life before we can again serve God. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;" and "the life is the light of men." The quarrel of Christ with us fallen sinners is, not that we do not serve him with our own present strength, for we have none, but that we will not come unto him that we may have life, a new life given in regeneration, the renewal of that energy for good which was lost by the fall, though in a higher degree. "I am come," saith the Saviour, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Again, he says, "I give unto them eternal life." This moral revivification is, we know, imparted by the Holy Ghost, and is maintained by his dwelling in the soul; but yet it is the effect of the Holy Ghost, not the Holy Ghost himself. There can be no doubt of such an energy being wrought in the soul. Call it by what name you will, there must be

communication of moral ability, which we have not by nature, before we can do the works of God; and this principle, imparted by regeneration, becomes thenceforward and forever a property of the soul itself, because it is the free unrevocable gift of Christ. It is to our moral nature what animal life is to the body; and the aforecited texts warrant us in calling it life. The animal life is not the body, but pervades it; the life of the soul is not the soul, but pervades it; so the moral life is not our moral nature, but pervades it. It is begun the moment we believe in Christ; the believer is conscious of its genial warmth, though here it struggles with many hindrances; and after the soul's admission to the presence of God in heaven, it will be perfect, unchecked, exulting in every pulse of the sanctified, glorified, Christ-like heart.

B. The second sense which the Scriptures give to *life*, is, the duration of animated existence. Employing ordinary phraseology, the sacred writers give the name *life* to the period of our existence here. "What is your life?" asks the apostle; "it is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." So, when recognizing the immortality of the soul, we say that it will *live forever*, whether in doom or in bliss; though eternal life, especially and eminently, describes the unending existence of the righteous in heaven.

C. The third sense which we note is, the enjoyment of the divine favor. As death is instant on the wrath of God, so is life on his favor. We are also accustomed to call that which gives to life its value and delight, *life*, intensifying its sense. Without happiness, life has the gloom of death, and, by a natural figure, that which

confers a second happiness, even the favor of God, may well be denominated "the life of life." But as this sense, being rhetorical, is covered by the former two, we speak of it here only to remind ourselves from Scripture that there is no true health or bliss or moral goodness, in this world or the next, that is not derived from the favor of God, which can reach us sinners only through the mediatorial merits of his Son Jesus Christ. "With thee is the fountain of life," says the Psalmist; "in thy light shall we see light."

From these considerations and Scriptures, we learn what are the elements of "eternal life," and to perceive the excellence of the several statements respecting it in the lesson of the Catechism for to-day.

1. The definition: "Life everlasting" is "*perfect salvation*," the fulness of which no mortal mind can comprehend.

Man came from the Creator's hand in the possession of perfect life, health, and full vigor in his body, mind, and moral nature, the image of God reflected from his soul, and securing to him the favor of God and a correspondent participation of divine pleasures. So in the first covenant, which was between God and man immediately (*i. e.* man himself), there is no promise of life to his obedience; he had life already, but only a threatening of death on his disobedience: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Had he continued obedient, he would have been ever in harmony with the divine character and will, and, consequently, with the divine administration of all things, so that nothing in himself or in outward things could have impaired his powers or his happiness. Yet his life, being contingent on his own merits, could not be said

to be absolutely eternal, since it might be, as it was, lost. When he sinned, so transgressing the laws imposed upon his moral being, he violated that harmony between him and God, putting himself into conflict with the divine will and administration, the consequence of which could be none other than destruction and misery. The wrath of God took the place of God's favor; the laws of nature, against which he dashed himself, shivered his being by his own force against their irresistible steadfastness; and drinking in his thirst from other springs than those of the divine pleasures, he could derive from them only misery, — since, as God is infinitely blessed, what God draws no satisfaction from must be evil, and only evil, to his moral creatures. Death, therefore, came upon man, not only from the adjudged penalty, but also, and as a providential necessity, from the eternal nature of things.

It is to be noted that the sin which "brought in death and all our woe," involved the depraved action of the entire man. His heart withdrew his affectionate reverence for God's parental authority, trust in God's parental wisdom, and reliance upon God's parental care. His will, following a perverted judgment, chose a method for his welfare adversely opposite to that which God had proposed to him, and his reasoning was as untrue as his heart was unfaithful. His senses were abused to stimulate a wicked lust for the thing forbidden, by tampering with the beauty and fragrance and relish of the fruit, in the eating of which he proposed to himself the acquisition of an ungodly knowledge. His hand and mouth consented to put within his body the seeds which he was forewarned

were fatal. Hence death came upon his whole nature, — his body, his spirit, and his moral faculties ; because each and all were in opposition to him, who is the only source of life and blessedness. His body became corruptible, his understanding dark and erring, his heart depraved ; all at variance with each other and with all the order of the divine government, because at variance with God himself ; for great as is the conflict which the sinner enters into with external things, there is a yet greater conflict which his human nature finds within himself ; — the flesh, the judgment, the heart, his appetites, his choice, his reason, and his desires, no longer respecting each other's safe limits, but abusing, deceiving, enslaving, and torturing each other, provoking each other's vengeance, and accomplishing on each other and themselves the vengeance of God.

The full execution of the sentence is not accomplished, because of the remedial plan proclaimed immediately after the fall ; nor will be until, after the resurrection, the mediatorial Judge will complete the divine justice upon all who reject his grace, in their eternal death. But even now in the restrained degree of that wrath, what fearful evidence do we see of this suicidal, general war of man against himself, and man against his brother ! If right reason prevailed, his desires, his affections, his appetites, would be all controlled by the just and not invisible laws which God has set for them ; now itself seduced, its perceptions blinded, under its depraved bias, reason struggles against itself, sets its ingenuity to defend error, pleads for crime, and justifies revolt even from its own logic, or, at a loss for further sophistry, abandons its royal prerogative, and serves like a captive consenting to degradation, a willing slave to

the imbruted flesh. Thus erring and extravagant beyond the limits of divine rule, man blunders and entangles himself with the interests of others, to which, were all faithful, there would be perpetual accord ; until envy, fraud, falsehood, jealousy, hate, rapine, and murder break the securities of social peace, load the painful earth with almshouses and prisons, arm nations against nations with the very sulphureous fires of hell, and deluge the fields, eager for harvests of plenty, in floods of human gore. If such be the death which sin brings upon man even while the Saviour pleads, what must be its horrible throes and burnings and cruelties in that world of fiends, where the wrath of the Lamb will abandon the world of human transgressors to the unchecked and ever-increasing fury of their own passions and eternal hates.

Now, says our instructor, eternal life is perfect salvation. It is, and has been from all eternity, the blessed purpose of God to rescue, through Christ, the lost sinner who will accept the grace from eternal death, and by consequence to endow the penitent believer with a new life ; and as this mercy and love is justified, not by any merit of his own, but solely through the atoning merits of Christ, so its perpetuity, not contingent on man's fallible obedience, but bestowed freely in reward of Christ's infinite merit, becomes secure, and the new life is eternal. This new, infallible life is more than the effect of pardon. The sentence of death was, indeed, the sovereign act of God ; but it was also in entire, we may even say necessary, consistence with his holy nature, and holy administration of things ; so that the mere pardon, were it possible, would yet leave man in the natural deplorable consequences of his rebellion

against the order of his own nature and the laws of the universe. Hence there must be a restoration of life from God to man, life in his moral being, life in his soul, life in his body, so that all may be brought into and secured in a vigorous, harmonious activity and delight: vigorous, because maintained by the divine power of the giver; harmonious and delightful, because in harmony with the will of the ever-blessed and gracious God.

This salvation is promised, and in heaven will be accomplished for all that believe, — perfect life for the moral being, perfect life for the reason, perfect life for the body. There, in that second more glorious paradise, the believer shall enjoy life immeasurably more abundant than that of which sin has robbed us, because it will be wrought in us, through the intercession of Christ, by the creative energy and indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. There the heart, filled with the love of God, will forever be above weakness or temptation; the reason, filled with the light of God, will never know shade, bias, or error; and the body, purged from all grossness by the transformation of the grave and the resurrection, animated in every part with ever-youthful health, and spiritualized into a near likeness of the transfiguring soul, will forever serve, assist, and enhance the blessedness of its immortal spirit; and the entire man be so perfect, as to be perfectly holy, wise, and vigorous, but not so perfect that he will cease to ascend higher and higher, expanding more and more, enjoying greater and greater bliss, because more and more like God. Were either element of this eternal life withheld, the bliss and salvation would be incomplete. The purest heart would suffer from an erring

or a weak mind, the noblest intellect from a diseased or feeble body; but the gospel promises the perfection of all; and only in faith upon that revelation can the man, called of God in Christ Jesus, say, as he looks up from the sorrows, infirmities, follies, and sins of this present world: "When I awake with thy likeness," O God, "I shall be *satisfied*."

Oh, what peace, what strength, what consciousness of truth, what self-delight, what Godlike energy of thought and love and purpose, shall be accounted worthy to enter that kingdom on whose throne Christ sits, the second Adam, the representative of the penitent, and the pattern of his glorified ones! Faint are our guesses, because, though the revelation be rich, our sin-weakened souls cannot take in the glory. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, O God, the things which thou hast prepared for them that love thee!"

But, blessed be thy name, what we "know not now, we shall know hereafter!"

"No sin to cloud, no lure to stay
The soul as on she springs;
Thy light upon her joyous way,
Thy sunshine on her wings!"

Nor may we deny ourselves the edification and happiness of completing the contrast of eternal life to the evils and miseries which sin has brought upon our fallen race. Man is essentially a social being, bound to his fellows by indissoluble ties, communicating and deriving happiness or misery, as righteousness or sin produce their effects on individual character. We see what sin has wrought in the crimes and conflicts of the world; but in that new world, among the ransomed

race of the second Adam, the personal life of the believer will appear beyond all imagination more grand, glorious, and full of rapture, in the life of the whole countless company! Each will see in every other of his Christ-like brethren the image of his own God; the same exulting consent to eternal truth; the same adoring love of the ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier; the same burning zeal of service, thanksgiving, and praise; the same beauty of form and countenance, radiant as Christ's transfigured on the mount; no sorrow in his own heart, no doubt in his own mind, no weakness in his own flesh; and no sympathy with another's pain, or pity for another's error, or yearning over another's unbelief. All are as holy and as happy as himself; and as they move each after his own sanctified will on the various offices and errands of heavenly duty, there is neither shock nor confusion; and as they unite their voices in unanimous joy, there is not amidst the innumerable chorus one discordant note or faltering cadence or minor accident. There, there shall be no envy, for all shall be rich in God; nor strife, for all shall be satisfied. Oh, what a world will it be where shall be no sick-bed, no watcher beside the helpless sufferer, no grave, no mourner, no dread of harm to those we love! — no clamor, no wrong, no murder, no battle! — but peace, like a cloudless noon, will fill the atmosphere with golden radiance, and every spirit overflow with love and joy and sympathy of perfect bliss. It must follow,

II. That a principal part of this blessedness will consist in glorifying God.

"And that to praise God therein forever."

The most lively idea we get of heaven from the

scriptural revelations is that of a vast throng of glorified saints and radiant angels standing around the throne of God and the Lamb, singing to their golden harps responsive and symphonious hallelujahs; cherubim and seraphim, angel and archangel, admiring and applauding the divine attributes and works; ransomed sinners joining in the doxologies, but celebrating in strains, at once more tender and exulting, the wondrous mysteries of redeeming love, which brought them from the depths of sin and shame and misery to the height of holy, glorious, triumphant life. Not that such exultations are all the employ of heaven. The active natures of the happy myriads have other faculties to be enlisted in the divine honor. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the conceptions of man to conjecture the methods of gratitude in which they will display their love and admiration of the divine Benefactor; doubtless there will be many and various services of the divine will in that exalted sphere of truth and holiness; but the intention of the Holy Ghost is to teach us that praise will be the spirit and motive of all the heavenly engagements. Now and since the fall, the church on earth has been struggling on against sin, and opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil, hoping, desiring, anticipating, praying for grace and victory, but yet not in possession of the exceeding great and precious things promised by the everlasting covenant. Even our divine Lord and example in the days of his flesh made supplication for help and succour with strong crying and tears, while for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame; and now maketh continual intercession for his followers as they are fighting their way up from the vale of tears

to the heights of the celestial Zion, expecting till his and their enemies are put under his feet. But then, when the ransomed of the Lord have all reached home, with "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (*vide* Isaiah xxxv. 10), the mighty work will have been accomplished; the sword and the shield will be flung aside, that the hands may strike the golden strings, or bear aloft the victor's palm. There will be no more need of prayer, for the Redeemer's own soul will be satisfied; no more space for longing desire, for all shall be filled with glory: faith will have done her office, and, standing beside the throne, point backward to the manger and the cross; while hope, calmly leaning on her anchor, will look onward along the ever-opening ages, spanned by the rainbow, and see naught but ever-increasing developments of perfect life; and love, having cast her crown at the feet of her Lord, will ask, "What shall I render for all these benefits?"—and memory will recall with never-wearying repetitions all the loving-kindnesses of that redeeming grace, which led and sustained and comforted the pilgrim all along his weary way to the rest and plenty of his Father's house. Wide as heaven is, strong as the glorified faculties will be, there then can be found neither space nor energy for aught but praise,—praise "forever telling, yet untold."

And that the believer may be assured of his heavenly inheritance, he has the earnest of it even here.

III. He feels in his heart the beginning of eternal joy. "In him," (Christ,) says the apostle, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eternal life is given to us the moment that we believe,—not

the fulness of life everlasting, but the actual beginning of it. It is begun in feebleness, like the life of a newborn babe; but it is the same life which shall animate and give celestial vigor to the man made perfect in Christ Jesus. It is begun by the indwelling of the same spirit which will irradiate the saints on high with divine glory. It is the Spirit of Christ which implants the image of Christ, at once the seal and sum of heavenly perfection; as by the Holy Ghost the child who now sits the man Christ Jesus on his peerless throne, "Christ in you the hope of glory." Hence it follows that there must be correspondent manifestations in the believer. The life eternal must show itself in the growing change of his whole nature from the death of sin. "You hath he quickened which were dead in trespasses and sins." Thus there will be new life in our moral faculties. "Ye are his workmanship," says the apostle, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." This is more than persuasion, more even than light. It is the communication of a new principle. "Ye have not chosen me," saith our Lord, "but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit might remain." It is the blessed purchase of Christ for his people, and his gift to his people,—the purchase and gift of him who died for the ungodly, and those who are without strength, that he might "save his people from their sins"; and this he does by sending his Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to beget them to a new and holy life, which though begun and carried gradually on amidst their remaining sins and infirmities, he will by the same spirit consummate in everlasting glory. Hence the believer, though once without God in the

world, not subject to the law of God, and utterly incapable of such obedience, his heart enmity against God, and his will as prone to evil as the sparks naturally fly upward, is now changed in all his aims, purposes, and desires. He loves God; he has in his heart the spirit of a child, and is conscious of a strength not his own to do the things he loves and desires to do. His love, his strength, his desires are not perfect as they should be; he is yet compassed about with infirmity, temptation, and sin; but grace is in his heart, struggling with them all, and, if he is faithful at the throne of grace, daily achieving some victory, and making progress to his final perfection. The tide of his soul has changed, and where it once flowed in a fearful ebb downward to death, it now takes a flood toward God and heaven. Every believer, not perhaps always, or at least not always in an equal degree, is conscious of this, and he rejoices in the gift, and in the hope of eternal life, of which it is the earnest and the assurance. But when the love of God, the law of God, the glory of God are not the ruling motives of our present life, when the direction of our desires, the aim of our hopes, are not toward the holiness of heaven, we have no warrant to expect that we shall escape the bitter pains of eternal death. The life must be begun here, or it will never be ours beyond the grave. Faith — faith the gift of God, faith fruitful of good works — alone is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

As with moral life, so is it with life in the understanding. We are by nature alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us. Sin has depraved our judgment and distorted our perceptions.

Whatever reason we may have about other matters, (and there our best reason is full of error,) we have, and can have, no true knowledge of holy things. The eyes of our understanding must be enlightened before we can receive divine teaching. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." There must, therefore, be given to the understanding a new life, an invigorating principle holding the faculties together in a just order, freeing it from prejudice, prompting it in the course of truth, and causing it to rise upward to the source of light. So the apostle: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Nay, the Scripture everywhere characterizes the ungodly as fools; and fools they are, whatever be their genius or attainments in other things, when we consider their aversion to God, their murmuring against his requirements, or their fond search after what perishes in the using, and brings death on their souls. On the other hand, the effect of religion is to strengthen the reason and control the judgment, so that not only in religious matters, but in all things, the understanding is improved and improvable. "The entrance of thy word giveth life, it giveth understanding to the simple." Within the sphere of religious ideas, the effect of the new life is unmistakably regeneration. The love of God, the preference of eternity, the desire for the Saviour's glory, help the mind to turn from the motives of self and sin, fill it with dignified aims, and surround it with a healthy medium through which to consider things in their true light. Hence, one of the first evidences of the regeneration is a new sense of the divine Word.

It speaks to us; we are conscious of its bearing upon us, and it has an authority which we cannot resist, and would not if we could. We see the shortness of this life, and look through it to eternity. Its precepts guide us, its promises strengthen us, its doctrines enlighten us; and, above all, its exhibitions of Christ and his person and his love charm and delight us. It is the beginning of that knowledge which shall be the consummate science of heaven. But where there is no sense of this new vigor in Christian understanding, and the revelations of God and heaven have no attraction to our study, we have no evidence of a divine life in our souls. So, also, as the passions and appetites warp and bias the reason of a "natural man," urging him to transgress the laws which God has set between him and his neighbor,—when the love of God rules his heart, and the light of God his mind, will his life be virtuous, honest, faithful, and kind in all his relations to his fellow-men; and he who does not find that his religion moves him to peace and justice and kindness and charity and mercy toward his fellows, has no warrant to expect admittance to that heaven where all is love and mutual joy in the happiness of all.

As for the animal life, which has been so greatly impaired by sin, it must continue in its course to the dissolution of the grave. The vigor of eternal life is not promised to us until after the resurrection. Yet, even now, some evidences of its returning power, or at least the methods of that invigoration, may be seen. As sin corrupts the body, as evil passions in the soul shake and undermine its power and health,—so that even heathen moralists taught that vice is its own

avenger,—a faithful observance of the divine laws has ordinarily a most beneficial influence upon the physical man, not only in restraining it from excesses, or sparing it from the exhausting effects of immoderate orgasms and the fevers of impatient lust, from the injuries of provoked violence and the rash dangers of headlong passions,—but also in husbanding its strength by the calm virtues of continence, temperance, and good-will. Human life has its limits, beyond which the best conduct cannot prolong it; but no one can doubt that those limits have been greatly contracted by vice and violence and hereditary taints of vitiated blood. Were the world inhabited only by virtuous and peaceable people, the grave would not so soon claim the bodies of men. So he who does not learn from his religion to keep his body under, by a wise self-discipline, who wastes the powers he should use for God, or wickedly impairs them by his indulgence of secret thoughts of crime and excesses of appetite, cannot hope for the life of heaven when in his flesh, now abused and prostituted, he shall stand before God in the judgment. God will have mercy on our infirmities, for he knows that we are but dust; yet whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. "For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Let us, then, daily keep in view our eternal life. So shall we in this present world inherit the best blessings of earth, and at last be full of joy in the light of God's countenance! Amen.

LECTURE XXIX.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OPENED.

TWENTY-THIRD LORD'S DAY.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OPENED.

QUEST. LIX. *But what doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?*

ANS. That I am righteous in Christ before God, and am heir of eternal life.

QUEST. LX. *How art thou righteous before God?*

ANS. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ: so that though my conscience accuse me that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil, notwithstanding God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me, inasmuch as I embraced such a benefit with a believing heart.

QUEST. LXI. *Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only?*

ANS. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but only because the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself in any other way than by faith only.

THE lesson for to-day demands our best attention. It gives the only answer to that question which all religions have sought to solve: "How can man be justified with God?" (Job xxv. 4,) by setting forth concisely and clearly the great protestant, evangelical doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

God, who devised and executed the gracious plan by which he is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, alone could declare it. It is, therefore, purely a doctrine of revelation; and the business of reason is, simply to inquire what is taught concerning

this way of mercy in the holy Scriptures, and especially to mark the relations which the several truths comprehended by it bear to each other.

In attempting this, the wide range of our subject requires us to imitate the conciseness of our instructor, and we shall, without farther preface, follow closely his order.

The Answer to the 59th Question declares THE FACT that the believer is *righteous* before God.

The Answer to the 60th Question, THE REASON why he is righteous before God to be, solely because "God, without any merit of his, but only of mere grace, grants and *imputes to him the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ.*"

And the Answer to the 61st Question, THE MANNER in which he becomes a partaker of the righteousness of Christ to be by faith only, "not that he is acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of his faith, but only "because he cannot receive and apply to himself" "the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ" "in any other way than by faith."

The whole discussion may then be conducted under two inquiries:

FIRST: *What is meant by being righteous before God?* And

SECONDLY: *How the Christian, though a sinner, is righteous before God?*

FIRST: *What is meant by being righteous before God?*

In order properly to understand the scriptural statement of the doctrine before us, it is necessary to remember that God is represented as dealing with the sinner in the character of a judge. Hence the language is that used to describe *legal* transactions, and the

terms are to be taken in a forensic or juridical sense (*i. e.* as they are taken in courts of law). Not that God patterns his justice after that of men; for in the exercise of that attribute, as in everything else, his ways are infinitely "above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts"; but he graciously condescends to explain his truth by such words as are best adapted to our capacities and habits of thought. Hence man is said to be under "a law"; to be brought "into judgment" or trial, to be "condemned" or "justified," to be "guilty" or "righteous."

Justification, in this forensic sense, is the opposite of *condemnation*. Thus the apostle: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died" (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Justification does not *make* the person who has been under trial just or righteous. It is only the act *pronouncing* him just or righteous in the eye of the law, *i. e.* free from all charges against him.* "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Yet was every one of that elect personally and really a sinner. So condemnation does not make the person who has been under trial, a sinner, unjust, or unrighteous. It only pronounces him liable to the penalties of sin, injustice, or unrighteousness. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Which means, that "there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. xii. 1), because, though they are actually sinners, Christ, by the interposition of his death, has satisfied the law on their behalf, and they are consequently free from the punishment to which

* See Booth's *Reign of Grace*.

they would otherwise have been condemned. So nothing is more frequent in Scripture than distinctions between justification by the law or by works, and justification by faith,—the righteousness which is of the law, and the righteousness of faith. Thus the apostle: "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. iii. 20); and again: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." When using the term *righteous*, he says: "It is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10); and in Hebrews he speaks of Noah becoming "heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (xi. 7). In Philipians he declares his desire to be found in Christ, "not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (iii. 9). To be righteous in the sight of God, as the term is used here by our instructor, does not mean to be actually righteous in one's self, because he says "righteous in Christ," but to be declared, accounted, and treated as righteous in the eye of the law by God.

Now the law of God is twofold. It forbids wrong deeds under severe penalties, and requires good deeds with promises of reward. Righteousness, therefore, in the eye of God's law, is to be considered as twofold: *negative*, freedom from wrong-doing; and *positive*, the doing of right.

It is true that, in one sense, not to do right is to do wrong, and to do wrong is not to do right. Yet we mark the distinction between negative and positive righteousness, because, in order to the enjoyment of God's favor, which is bestowed only in reward of right-

eousness, it is necessary that, besides the pardon of our sins, which but frees us from the penalties of the law, we should have a positive merit before God to entitle us to the rewards of the law. Thus our instructor bids the believer say, not merely that he is "righteous before God," but also that he is "an heir of eternal life."

To be perfectly righteous in the sight of God is, *to be free from all the penalties, and entitled to all the rewards of his holy law*. We are now prepared for our SECOND inquiry: How the Christian, though a sinner, is righteous before God?

And under this head we shall consider

1. *The reason*; and
2. *The manner* of his being righteous before God.

1. *The reason.*

A. It is not because of any righteousness personally his own; for he acknowledges that his righteousness or justification is "notwithstanding his conscience doth accuse him of having grossly transgressed all the commandments of God and kept none of them, and his being still inclined to all evil, so that he has no merit of his own."

We shall not stay here to show the entire absence of all righteousness from the soul of every living child of Adam, and our entire corruption in sin. This has in former discourses been argued fully before you. It is sufficient now to repeat that God has declared, "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Christ Jesus came "to seek and to save the lost," "to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." The magnitude of that provision of mercy

which has been made in the mediation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate and suffering for us, is clear proof that there can be no salvation for us by our own merit; for "if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21). Our great apostle Paul knew nothing of salvation out of Christ. He had some dreams of the kind while yet an unbelieving pharisee, but when he came to see the full force and wide extent of the law of God, all hope of saving himself died within him (Rom. vii. 9); and after he had been long a preacher of that faithful saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he still acknowledges himself "the chief of sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). Those, therefore, who desire and think to be saved by their own righteousness, must go elsewhere than to the gospel for a warrant of their hope. They have neither part nor lot in Christ's salvation. The Bible has nothing to do with them but to condemn them; "for he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18).

B. It is because of the merit of Jesus Christ.

Thus the instructor says, "God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ; even so as if I had never committed any sin; yea, as if I had accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me." And that this language is in agreement with Scripture, is clear from what the apostle says (Rom. iii. 21-28): "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and prophets: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ

unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

We have seen, that, to be righteous in the sight of God, is to be *free from all the penalties* and *entitled to all the rewards* of his holy law. But such a righteousness the Christian can never obtain for himself, because, as a sinner who has come short of the glory of God, he has not only forfeited all claims to the rewards, but has become obnoxious to all the penalties of the law; which, as they include eternal death, it is impossible for him ever perfectly to exhaust. Except, therefore, some other method of justifying him than his own righteousness be provided, his salvation is impossible. Here, (blessed be the name of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!) the wisdom and power of the mercy of God comes to our help.

Christ, the Son of God, incarnate in our nature, condescends, according to covenant with the Father, to become the Saviour of the sinner. In accomplishing this blessed work, he offered himself to bear the penalties of the law which the sinner had incurred. The sacrifice was accepted by God when he took the life of

Jesus upon the cross. Besides this, during the whole of his life upon earth, he honored the law of God by a perfect obedience, and thus became entitled himself to all the rewards of righteousness. Christ Jesus, therefore, as the Saviour, and in the place or room of the sinner, made himself perfectly righteous in the sight of the law: *negatively* righteous, inasmuch as he had discharged fully all the penalties of the law; and *positively* righteous, as by a perfect obedience he earned all the rewards of the law. Now the doctrine of the Scripture and the argument of the Catechism is, that God accepts and acknowledges this whole righteousness of Christ in place of, or as a substitute for, that righteousness which the believer ought to have rendered in his own person, but could not; so that in Christ, or through Christ, the believer, though himself a sinner, becomes perfectly righteous in the sight of the law, being set free from all its penalties and entitled to all its rewards. Thus the Catechism: "God grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction (that is the expiation), righteousness (that is the obedience), and holiness (that is the acceptableness) of Christ, even so as if I had never had nor committed any sins (because all his sins have been expiated), yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me."

He says, God "*grants*" this righteousness, because it was of mere grace that God provided this righteousness; it was his purpose to save which led him to the provision of that righteousness; and having provided it, he may bestow its benefits upon whom he will, although he promises and offers those benefits to all who will believe. They who believe become entitled

to the righteousness through grace of the promise, for God will keep his word; and becoming entitled to the righteousness, they receive then, as a matter of justice to Christ and mercy to them, all the consequences of that righteousness, even deliverance from the punishment which was due to them because of the sins which Christ expiated, and the rewards due to those good works which they could not do, but which Christ did for them.

He says, also, "God *imputes* this righteousness." By which is meant that God reckons or accounts to the believer the righteousness of Christ as his own. For this is the proper and the scriptural sense of *impute*. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," or does not charge with iniquity (Ps. xxxii. 2), which the apostle declares (Rom. iv. 6) to be the imputation of "righteousness without works," or the imputation of a righteousness which he had not wrought out for himself; for in a verse a little before he had said (4, 5): "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted (the same Greek word, λογίζομαι) for righteousness."

Understand, if you please, precisely what we mean here. God, by imputing the righteousness of Christ to the believer, does not make the righteousness of Christ the personal righteousness of the believer. That is impossible. The personal acts or qualities of one cannot by any process be made the personal acts or qualities of another. The very idea is absurd. But in imputing the righteousness of Christ to him, God gives to the believer the legal consequences of Christ's righteousness;

he has the benefit of it as much as if it were his own. He is freed from the penalties of the law because Christ has borne them in his stead. He receives the rewards of Christ's obedience as if he had obeyed himself.

This, then, is the reason why the believer, though himself a sinner, is righteous in the sight of God. It is because God grants and imputes to him the righteousness of Christ.

It is possible that some may object to this merciful arrangement of God in accepting a vicarious or substituted satisfaction, because, in the *first* place, the law requiring righteousness from all, the righteousness of one cannot be the righteousness of many; and in the *second* place, the law requiring personal obedience, no vicarious or substituted obedience can in any way be accepted. Now we might answer such objections by the express declaration of the apostle, that "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). Where God justifieth, who shall condemn? But we ask the objector to consider both the *dignity of the substitute*, Christ Jesus, and the *end of the sanctions* added to the law.

The *substitute* is the man Jesus, in whom *God the Son was incarnate*. The merit, therefore, of his righteousness, both in expiation and obedience, is infinite, and can, therefore, cover the defects and sins of as many sinners such as we are as he chooses to give the benefits of his righteousness unto.

The *end of sanctions to a law* (that is, penalties and rewards) is to maintain its authority over the subject. And we ask, by what method could God declare his determination to vindicate the honor of his law in its forbidding of sin better than by refusing to pardon any

sinner before he had exacted from his son Jesus Christ the full penalty due the sinner for sin? Or in what manner could he testify his appreciation of righteousness so fully as by causing his own son to become incarnate that he might honor the law upon earth, and then bestowing the unspeakably rich reward of eternal life upon his people for that righteousness' sake?

We grant that in human law such substitution could not be admitted, though something of the kind (yet not in strict justice) has occurred. But there can be no parallel between the human law and the divine. The human law ought to be but a transcript of the divine, and therefore the human judge has no alternative but to execute it strictly. God is the author of his own law, and the sovereign offended. He, therefore, *has* the right to justify and pardon a transgressor in such a way as he is satisfied that his authority receives no detriment.

Besides, the thing is impossible among men; for where could such a substitute as Jesus be found? Where all are subjects, the law requires the obedience of all; and, therefore, no one could so abstract himself from his own duty as to prepare a supererogatory righteousness, which might be imputed to the benefit of another. The Son of God obeyed for us a law to which he was not himself subject, and therefore he has a right to bestow the rewards of his righteousness upon whom he will.

The *manner* in which the sinner becomes righteous in Christ.

It is by *faith*; * as the instructor says, "I cannot receive or apply the same to myself in any other way."

* For Faith, see Seventh Lord's Day.

I need not stay to cite proofs from Scripture of the necessity of faith in order to our justification and salvation. The whole tenor of the book shows that he only who believeth can be saved; and this very righteousness is called "the righteousness which is of faith" (Rom. x. 6), or "by faith" (Heb. xi. 7).

But it will readily be seen that even the scheme of salvation by the imputed righteousness of Christ cannot be reconciled to the holiness of God, unless the cheerful and unqualified *submission* of the sinner, who is pardoned, to the justice and excellence of the law be secured, and also his *reformation* from sin unto holiness. This is done by requiring faith from him.

1. His *submission*; for by accepting Christ's work in his behalf he not only submits to be saved in the way which God appoints, but he acknowledges that he ought to have rendered the righteous obedience which Christ has rendered for him, and deserved to have suffered the penalties which Christ suffered for him. Nay, he rejoices that he has an opportunity of fully honoring the law of God, which he loves, by presenting through his faith the perfect expiation and obedience of Christ. It is his highest satisfaction to believe not only that he is pardoned and accepted of God, but that it is in such a way as reflects the greatest glory upon God and his law, while it humbles himself as utterly destitute of merit, and saved by grace alone.

2. His *reformation* is secured because the proper effect, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is to purify the heart, to work by love, and to overcome the world. So that it is certain that when God justifies he sanctifies, because he justifies only those who believe. Indeed, faith is itself a part, as well as the instrument of sanc-

tification, for no one can truly believe in Christ without being, in the very act of faith, turned from sin unto God. It is, therefore, most false to assert, as some errorists do, that the doctrine of justification by faith encourages or tolerates licentiousness of life. Scripture, experience, even reason show that the very reverse is the case, and that the requisition of faith, in order to salvation, is the very best means of securing the hearty repentance and obedience of the sinner. But upon this we shall have occasion to discourse more at large in our exposition of the next Lord's Day.

We must, however, be careful to remember that there is no merit of any kind in faith itself. The only merit which justifies the believer is that of Christ, as the Catechism says: "Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but only because the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God." No merit of ours can be mingled with his. Nor can there be any merit proper in merely believing. Faith is necessary to our justification, because, in order to the righteousness of Christ being applied to us, it must be accepted; and as the Catechism says: "I cannot receive and apply the same to myself in any other way than by faith only." It may be necessary to the pardon of a rebel that he kneel and stretch forth his hand to receive the certificate of it from his sovereign; but there is no merit in either the posture or the act. So there is no merit in our humbly and gratefully accepting the pardon of God in Christ. The apostle does, indeed, speak of "faith" being "counted" or "imputed for righteousness"; but then he means not the faith itself, but the object of it, the righteousness which is of God. For if

he means otherwise, he overthrows the main doctrine, which he would establish, that we are saved by no merit of our own, but only by the merit of Jesus Christ.

Thus, my brethren, you have before you the glorious and most comforting doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

It teaches us that

1. Salvation is provided for the lost and ruined sinner.

However sinful we may have been, still are, and feel that we shall yet be, because of the corruption within us, we ought not to despair of mercy, seeing that God offers pardon and favor to us through Christ his Son. We are in most awful peril if we be not saved through Christ, because God offering to us mercy declares us to be lost and undone in ourselves; yes, so utterly lost and undone that we can be saved only by the infinite merit of the Son of God.

But this salvation is certainly ours, if with true and penitent hearts we simply accept the offer made to us in the gospel, and rely only upon the merits of Jesus Christ, our very faith being the evidence of our pardon and favor with God.

2. The salvation is all of grace.

Grace contrived the plan; for God was not constrained, except by his infinite mercy, to save sinners who have so richly deserved his wrath.

Grace provides the righteousness necessary for the salvation of the sinner, and which none but God incarnate could have wrought out in our stead.

Grace bestows the salvation upon the sinner, because the faith by which he receives the benefits of Christ's righteousness is wrought in him by the power of the Holy Ghost.

3. The salvation demands our entire submission to God in Christ.

We must abjure all trust in our own merit, and accept it only as a free gift of God's mercy.

We must penitently acknowledge our sins which needed such an expiation, and rejoice in the honor done to the divine law by the obedience of Christ in our stead.

We must receive with the pardon the grace of the Holy Ghost, that we may live to the glory and for the cause of him who saves none from hell whom he does not save from sin.

Christians, give all glory to God, who saves from such condemnation; who promises so blessed an eternal life; and who saves us from hell, and makes us heirs of heaven at such infinite cost, and by such infinite power.

Oh, the misery of those who are out of Christ! They are condemned already. They add to their sin the guilt of despising the mercy of God, the righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the Holy Ghost. They have no true hope of entering heaven, but, except they repent, must go away into everlasting punishment.

LECTURE XXX.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH DEFENDED;

OR,

THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

TWENTY-FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH DEFENDED; OR,
THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

QUEST. LXII. *But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?*

ANS. Because that the righteousness which can be approved of before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law; and, also, that our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

QUEST. LXIII. *What do not our works merit, which yet God will reward in this and a future life?*

ANS. The reward is not of merit but of grace.

QUEST. LXIV. *But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?*

ANS. By no means; for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

THE doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH alone, as taught in the last lesson of our Catechism and in the Confessions of all the Reformed churches, has been vehemently objected to. It offends the pride of men by declaring that they are, not only destitute, but incapable of merit in the sight of God, and that, therefore, they cannot be saved except through his free and sovereign mercy. Besides, God, in his word and providence, has established a vital connection between holiness and happiness, so that his favor is ever the reward of righteousness. This is the eternal rule of his government, emanating from his perfect justice and the entire harmony of his perfect attributes. The great purpose of Christianity is to restore the sinner to righteousness, and fit him by a radical reformation for eternal blessedness in the presence of God; and the whole

doctrine of the gospel is given to show that God is not merely merciful, but just, in the salvation of him which believeth in Jesus.

We are not, therefore, willing to suppose that it is only a cavilling, or even a self-righteous spirit, which requires demonstration of the consistency between these undoubted truths and salvation by faith alone. There may be an honest, though not an excusable, misunderstanding of the doctrine which it is our duty to sympathize with, and, so far as we can, correct. What is more natural than to ask, —

How is it that the gospel requires good works from us, and yet they make no part of our justification with God?

How is it, that the rewards of God's favor in this life, but especially in the life to come, are promised to those who do good works, and yet those works are without merit in God's sight?

Or, how can the promise of salvation to simple faith in Jesus Christ fail to encourage men in a careless and presumptuous way of life?

These questions ought to be answered. It ought to be shown that so important an article of our creed is consistent with itself and every part of the word of God. To do this, is the object of the lesson for to-day, and of our present discourse. Thus,

The answer to our 62d Question declares, that

Our good works cannot be a part of our righteousness before God.

The answer to our 63d Question, that

The rewards promised to good works are not because of merit in themselves, but of the grace of God. And the answer to the 64th Question, that

It is an essential property of saving faith to bring forth fruits of thankfulness in good works.

The *first* shows why good works are not insisted upon as a method of salvation.

The *second*, how our good works receive reward, though they have no merit in themselves.

And the *third*, what the genuine effect of faith in Christ is upon the heart and life of the believer.

We shall, by God's help, attempt to discuss the three several propositions as they are laid before us in the lesson.

FIRST: *Good works cannot be a part of our righteousness before God.*

This may be proved at once by the *assertion* of God, that "by the deeds of the law (and there are no good works which the law does not require) there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." What God declares impossible cannot be.

It may be proved by the *fact* that God has provided in Christ an infinite righteousness for our justification, which would be manifestly unnecessary and superfluous if our own obedience could have availed in any way to save us. As the apostle says, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21).

And it may be proved by the *extent of the salvation*, which secures to the believer, though a sinner, a higher blessedness than was granted to man in innocence, and therefore, being out of all proportion to any supposable merit of ours, can only be accounted for by the infinite merit of Christ, the purchaser, and the principle of the gospel, that "where sin abounded, grace should much more abound" (Rom. v. 20). But let us add

to these the conclusive argument of our instructor in the answer to the 62d Question, which is that

We have not, and cannot have, any good works, properly so called, to present before God.

"The righteousness which can be approved of before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law; and . . . our best works in this life are all imperfect, and defiled with sin."

When we compare men with each other, it is not to be denied that we may find some bright contrasts to prevailing selfishness and wrong, yet it is from the prevalence of selfishness and wrong that most of what is accounted good in men has its seeming goodness. Among a nation habitually drunkards, one who drank to intoxication only several times a year, as the virtuous men of Athens at the feasts of Bacchus, would be considered a miracle of temperance, but among a nation habitually temperate, a single fit of drunkenness would stamp disgrace on the same person. In Christian countries it is most infamous for a man to treat with contempt and cruelty the wife of his bosom; in Hindoostan the reverse would be extraordinary. Cyrus, in refraining from the dishonor of his beautiful captive, won immortal praise, not because such an abuse of power would not have been in the last degree unmanly, but that such abuse was then universal. These are strong instances, but serve to show what false judgments may be formed from delusive circumstances. A man is liberal in his kindness to the poor, and he gets great credit for charitableness. But is not liberal kindness to the poor a duty binding upon all? Whence then such praise? Few are so unchar-

itable. Another pays debts, from which the letter of human law, but not equity, sets him free, and he is lauded for integrity. Is it not the duty of all men to pay what they really owe? Yes, but few are so honest. Another is distinguished for candor. Is not truth a universal duty? Alas! few are sincere. But who is there perfectly candid, perfectly honest, perfectly benevolent, perfectly pure? Where is there a character perfectly free from blemish? In a world of righteousness like heaven, the best patterns of what we here call human goodness would be strange deformities, and especially so were their inner motives and desires as apparent as their outward conduct.

But God tries us by no rule so partial and shifting as human opinion. He brings us to the test of his holy law. That law requires all righteousness. It is not satisfied with an outward compliance, beyond which human authority cannot penetrate, but searches like his omniscient eye into the thoughts and intents of the heart. The obedience he insists upon is a perfect obedience, an entire conformity to all his precepts. Thus the apostle Paul says (Gal. iii. 10), quoting from Deuteronomy (xxvii. 26), "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." The apostle James goes farther (ii. 10), and declares that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"; because he is a rebel against the authority of the law. It matters not what obedience we may otherwise or at other times perform, a single act of transgression in thought, word, or deed not only impairs our obedience, but brings us under the penalty of the curse. This is the fact, indeed, with regard to human

law. No one, convicted of a single theft or murder, is freed from punishment, because he did not steal ten purses, or murder ten men. It was his duty to refrain from stealing anything, or wounding any one. No previous or subsequent good conduct can expiate in the eye of justice any one act of crime. The law requires entire innocence. It is true, a generally good character may palliate, but never in strictness can atone for any offence. Repentance is not expiation, because all our time is demanded for perfect obedience.

Now, can we render such entire, perfect, constant obedience? Is there any one of our good works in its motive pure and unmingled with sin? Will all our conduct stand such a scrutiny? Is there any man that liveth and sinneth not? The word of God says No, and conscience echoes the negative. There is no one who has loved God with his whole heart, mind, and strength. There is no one who has loved his neighbor as himself. If one were to make a boast of such perfection, men would hoot at him for a hypocrite, and fear him as an arrant knave, who sought a confidence he would be sure to violate.

There is no hope from our own righteousness. We have not, and we cannot have, any good works, properly so called, to present before God. Our best works are too imperfect to deserve reward, and our actual sins positively condemn us.

But it may be said, that, if we sincerely endeavor to do the very best in our power, God will surely pardon the sins of our infirmities, and accept our service, imperfect as it may be. The justice of God warrants no such expectation. He says unequivocally, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." If he be so forgiving and

tolerant, the reason must lie in his mercy; and that would be salvation by grace, not of works. God is merciful, and in his mercy does pardon the sins and accept the services, though unworthy, of all who truly humble themselves to accept his grace. But he is merciful only in Christ, and for Christ's sake only he pardons and accepts the unworthy. If we seek salvation there, we shall certainly find it; but we cannot deserve it, and that is what we intended to prove.

SECONDLY: *The rewards promised to our good works are not because of merit in them, but of the grace of God.*

Rewards are certainly promised to the good works of God's people in this life, and especially in the life to come. The texts of Scripture to prove this are so numerous and familiar, that we scarcely need to recite any. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of one of Christ's disciples, shall not lose its reward (Matt. x. 42).

Good works are, indeed, essential to a warranted hope of heaven, as is clearly shown by our Lord in his parable of the builders (Matt. vii. 21-27), where the man who heard Christ's sayings and did them not is likened to one who built his house upon the sand, and to whom the Lord will say, "I never knew thee;" and in his description of the judgment (Matt. xxv. 31-46), where he declares that none but those who have done good to their fellow-men in trouble, shall be received into life eternal.

The good works of Christ's people follow them to heaven, and there determine the degree of glory which each believer shall receive. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their

works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). The precedence given in heaven to those who were faithful in great tribulations (vii. 14), and the spirit of the Scriptures throughout, show that in proportion to their fidelity shall be the reward of the redeemed, where there are different degrees of blessedness, as one star differeth from another star in glory, though all are bright.

Nay, we are permitted, in imitation of our Master, who, "for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 1, 2), to have "respect" as Moses had (xi. 26) "to the recompense of reward," and to believe, as the apostle assures us, that God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love. We are justified and encouraged in a noble ambition not to be the least in the kingdom of God, but to "lay up for ourselves treasures where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal" (Matt. vi. 20); and to secure a "great reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 12).

But all this value is given to our good works only in consequence of the grace of God in Christ.

1. It is this grace which pardons and delivers us from our sins, which otherwise would condemn and destroy us, notwithstanding all our efforts to do well; for, certainly, until we be delivered from guilt in the past, we can do nothing to merit favor.

2. It is this grace which covers and pardons all the defects which, in despite of all our efforts, will cling to our best attempts at service. The works of the believer are washed in Christ's blood, and adorned by his merits, and presented by his intercession. It is not because they are worthy, or that the worker is worthy, but because they are laid upon the altar Christ Jesus, that

they are both acceptable to God. For consider, my friends, the greatness of reward promised. Is it possible that the best righteousness a man could accomplish during the longest life on earth can deserve such eternal and unspeakably glorious wages as are given to the servants of Christ in heaven? No; nothing less than the righteousness of Christ could deserve a reward so vast; and it is because that righteousness is reckoned unto the believer, and his works are accepted through that righteousness, he receives the promises and the fulfilment of them. And

3. It is this grace which inclined the believer, once in "darkness," (Ephes. v. 8,) and "alienated from the life of God through ignorance" (iv. 18) to good works. But for sovereign grace he had remained dead "in trespasses and sins" (ii. 1). And having inclined him, it is the same grace which enables him to do good works. For, says the Saviour, "without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5); and the apostle exhorts us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

Since, then, it is grace that delivers us from condemnation, thus giving us the opportunity of doing good works, and grace which presents our good works, imperfect in themselves, but covered with Christ's merits, which grace had provided; nay, since it is grace which inclines and enables us to do any good work, surely, the reward of our good works is not of their merit, but of grace alone.

THIRDLY: *It is an essential property of saving faith to bring forth fruits of thankfulness in good works.*

"It is impossible," says our instructor, "that those

who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness."

This will readily be seen, if we consider

1. In whom the Christian believes. It is in Christ the Saviour from sin, who delivers from the necessary consequence of sin, which is misery, not only by expiating past sin, but by saving his people from sin itself. Thus the father of the Baptist, in his thanksgiving, says of God in Christ: "He grants unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, (*i. e.* our sins,) might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life" (Luke i. 74, 75). If, then, the great end and work of the Saviour be to make us obedient and holy, it is impossible that any one can truly believe in him and embrace him as a Saviour, who is not truly penitent, heartily desirous of forsaking all sins, and of living according to all the commandments of God. Consider

2. To whom faith unites the Christian.

By faith he is vitally united to Christ, as members of his body, he being the divine head (Ephes. v. 30); as branches to the stem, he being the living vine (John xv. 1-5); as living stones in God's spiritual house, he being the chief corner-stone (Ephes. ii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 5). Now, as the foundation gives strength and sustenance to the building, as the stem sheds life and fruitfulness through the branches engrafted into it, as the members of the body are vitally united to the head, directed by it and inspired from it, so all who truly believe in Jesus are animated by a life superior to their own, even the Spirit of Christ, made fruitful by an energy superior to their own, even the grace of the Spirit, and sustained by a power superior to their

own, even the strength of God; so it is impossible but that they will be animated, moved, and enabled to do good works. The absence of such, the proper effect, proves the absence of true faith, the cause. Consider

3. Of whom the Christian learns by faith.

It is of God in Christ, to whom all the prophets and the law bear witness. The true believer in Christ, therefore, believes in all the truth of God, as taught in the Scriptures. All the *doctrines*, all the *precepts*, all the *promises*.

He believes in the infinitely glorious and holy attributes of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and thus recognizes himself to be the responsible creature of the omnipotent, all-seeing, and just and good God. He carries this thought with him, and lives and moves and has his being in God.

He believes in the purity, exceeding breadth, and justice of the divine law; and thus is convinced of his sin, its enormity, and his imminent peril of eternal death, should he not be pardoned and delivered from his sins, but continue a wilful transgressor and rebellious creature.

He believes in the riches of God's grace by Jesus Christ; the infinite mercy, which proposed to save sinners; the infinite mercy which sent the Son, of the Son who came, and of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified the Son incarnate as the Saviour; the infinite merit of that righteousness which the Son wrought for the salvation of sinners; and the infinite grace of the Holy Ghost, by which that righteousness is applied to and the salvation accomplished for and in the believer; and he believes in the infinite glory and blessedness of that

life eternal, which is promised, from the Father by the Son and through the Spirit, to all who believe.

Now, my hearers, you cannot fail to perceive that such faith in Christ establishes in the soul of the believer, to incline and maintain him in good works, the three strongest principles of which our nature is capable: *fear, hope, and love.*

How will one, who believes in the awful holiness and terrible justice of God, dare knowingly to persevere in the commission of wrong or the neglect of right? What can restrain irregular desire and passion if an habitual sense of the divine presence and scrutiny do not?

And when faith shows in strong contrast to the cares and pleasures and gains of this passing life the bright eternity of rest and joy and glory which awaits God's true and zealous servants, when she points to the increased richness of their reward who have been more true and faithful, will not the *hope* of that heaven and its distinction be as an anchor to the soul of the tempted, a solace to the sad, and a cheerful argument to endure patiently, and work steadfastly, even to the end?

But above all, when the believer thinks of all the love of God in Christ to his soul, his atonement, his intercession, his power, and his long-suffering, — when he remembers Jesus in the manger, in the desert, in Gethsemane, on the cross, and then looks up to him upon his throne, — when he reads the precious promises bought by his Master's blood, and secured by his Master's Spirit, — will not his sinful, selfish thoughts give way before a gushing tide of *love* for Christ and God in Christ? Can he choose but live for his cause who died

and rose again that he might give eternal life to as many as would receive him?

Nay, my brethren, so vital is the connection between true faith and good works, that faith is the great instrument by which the Holy Spirit sanctifies the heart of the Christian. It is, in fact, itself a part of the sanctification, and the good works which it produces, the beginning and progress of the very salvation which Christ has promised to the believer.

Thus we argue that it is an essential property of saving faith to bring forth fruits of thankfulness in good works. And in this we see the harmony of the apostles Paul and James, when the one says, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28); and the other, "that by works man is justified and not by faith only" (James ii. 24), because, as James says (17, v.), "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone;" and (26, v.) "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." The true faith which engrafts a sinner into Christ is ever fruitful in good works; that seeming faith which does not produce such sanctifying consequences is not saving faith any more than a dead body is a man.

It is true, faith does not at once perfectly sanctify the repentant sinner. That is not the order of God's grace. But the work is begun with faith, and faith maintains a fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil, until at last it gains a consummate victory.

Let us learn from the whole subject,

1. Humility.

Pride in good works, or self-righteousness, is most inconsistent with a Christian temper; because all that

makes a difference in light or practice between one sinner and another is of grace, and because when the best Christian compares his best works with the only true standard, the law of God, he must find them to be in themselves utterly unworthy to appear before his Judge. Hence the best Christians are always the most humble, and prove it by being the most charitable in the judgment of others. It was not the pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men, whom God justified; but the publican, who cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Take heed," my brethren, "and beware of the leaven of the pharisees."

2. Encouragement.

The requirements of the divine law are very great, and the duties of a Christian life very difficult. When in our weakness we contemplate them, we are afraid and say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Who can be saved?" How shall we dare bring before God such a poor and imperfect service as the best we can render must be? Yet, my brethren, poor as our best service may be, it can be made better by divine grace. That "grace is sufficient for us"; and if we offer it unto God by faith in Christ Jesus, his righteousness can cover every defect and make meanness, glory; and poverty, abounding riches; while his blood washes away every stain. Oh, what a blessedness to lay our unworthy deeds of service upon the altar of Christ's worth, and see them transmuted into precious beauty, acceptable and welcome to God his Father; and to know that not one kind act, or word, or thought, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, shall ever be lost, but will meet us in heaven, and be our joy and reward and decoration forever among the angels of God! So the best be-

liever is ever the most zealous worker in good to God's cause and his fellow-men.

3. Caution.

If there be no salvation without true faith, and no true faith without good works, it is wise in us most carefully to examine ourselves, whether we have this faith or not. Do we account ourselves orthodox and strong in faith? We are deceiving ourselves, except we be at the same time earnest lovers of God and man, zealous in their service, and ready to devote all we have for their sakes. The three worst signs in a professing Christian are pride, sloth, and covetousness. I know not which is the worst, for they grow like the trefoil on one stem. But this is certain, covetousness is the least easily cured.

But, at the same time, let no one condemn themselves as wanting in true faith because they are not satisfied with the degree of love and zeal they have. It is faith which shows us our defects; and if we be truly sorry for them and make hearty endeavors to live according to the commandments of God, we may be sure that God accepts us in Jesus Christ, because such desires and efforts are the fruit of faith alone. Faith in Christ's cross is nothing except we follow him; nor can we follow him except we have faith in his cross; so that a true following of Christ proves a true faith in Christ.

Which faith, fruitful in good works, may God grant to us all for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

LECTURE XXXI.

FAITH FROM THE HOLY GHOST THROUGH THE
WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS.

TWENTY-FIFTH LORD'S DAY.

FAITH FROM THE HOLY GHOST THROUGH
THE WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS.

QUEST. LXV. *Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence does this faith proceed?*

ANS. From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments.

QUEST. LXVI. *What are the sacraments?*

ANS. The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed by God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promises of the gospel; viz: that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.

QUEST. LXVII. *Are both word and sacraments there ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?*

ANS. Yes, indeed; for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross.

QUEST. LXVIII. *How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the New Covenant, or Testament?*

ANS. Two; viz: holy baptism and the holy supper.

IF, as the Scriptures plainly teach, our salvation be wholly of grace, all the processes and means by which it is accomplished must also be of grace, especially faith, by which we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits. Thus the apostle says (Ephes. ii. 8), "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." The whole work of salvation through faith is of grace; and, consequently, the faith itself is the gift of God. For, as faith is the act of a regenerate soul, and a faculty so

superior to our fallen nature as to overcome its sinful tendency, it cannot be exercised by a sinner, except he has it from the grace of God. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Christ, by his spirit, is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. xii. 2).

But this dependence upon grace does not render our own efforts to attain salvation unnecessary. On the contrary, God the Holy Ghost works by means adapted to our natures, which means are part of his gracious plan, according to whose justified mercy he offers us salvation; and it is only as we use those means that we can hope for him "to work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." These means being appointed by God as those in the proper use of which he is willing to bless us, it is disobedience on our part not to use them zealously, and unbelief not to expect through them the blessings he has promised.

Our instructor, therefore, while he directs us to the Holy Ghost as the energetic cause of faith, directs us also to those means by our use of which he works and confirms faith in our hearts.

This divides our lesson for to-day under two heads: *FIRST: The Source of Faith.* "The Holy Ghost." *SECONDLY: The Means of Faith.* "The preaching of the gospel," and "the use of the sacraments."

FIRST: The Holy Ghost is the source of faith.

In answer to the question, "Whence doth this faith (by which we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits) proceed?" our instructor says: "From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments."

Here are three things to be marked: 1. Faith comes from the Holy Ghost. 2. It is wrought in the heart. 3. By the use of certain means.

1. Faith comes from the Holy Ghost.

The Master, in opening the gospel to Nicodemus, asserts first, the necessity of our being born again, and then, of faith in Christ: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He gives the reason for this order: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." No man in his natural state can see or enter into the spiritual things of the kingdom of God. He must have a new spiritual life before he can discern and apprehend the doctrine of Christ; as the apostle argues (1 Cor. ii. 14), "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We cannot believe the truths of the gospel until we know them.

God so loved the world as to give his Son for our salvation; the Son has given himself; and the Holy Ghost has his office in the saving work, which is the application of Christ's righteousness to the sinner, and this the Divine Sanctifier does by enabling the sinner to believe in Christ, for "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

The grace of the Holy Ghost is declared, throughout the New Testament, to be given by the Father in answer to the prayers of the Son, and in reward of his righteousness. "When the Comforter is come, whom I

will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," said the Saviour (John xv. 26); and the apostle Peter at the Pentecost, "Therefore being (*i. e.* Christ) at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye both see and hear" (Acts ii. 33). Thus faith is itself a consequence of the righteousness of Christ; and we are as dependent upon the Holy Ghost for faith as we are upon the Son for atonement, and upon the Father for pardon.

2. The Holy Ghost works faith in the heart of the sinner.

Heart is here used, in the Scriptural sense, for the moral faculties of man. It is the renewed man that believes. The Holy Ghost does not believe for him, but works faith in him, because faith is a personal assent to truth, which man must give for himself.

Neither is faith an impulse, instinct, or involuntary motion, but the free, intelligent exercise of a rational agent, who believes because he knows what is truth upon sufficient testimony, the testimony of God. It is wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, not against the will, or contrary to the laws of mind, but strictly in accordance with our rational nature. There is, indeed, a new life shed through the faculties, freeing them from the bondage of sense, and inspiring them with energy to perceive the truth; yet faith is the result of conviction and the persuasion of the understanding, with the choice of the heart. Hence the apostle says, "*We persuade men*" (2 Cor. v. 11), the Saviour declares that the Holy Ghost *convince*s (reproves, our translation has it) (John xvi. 8), and the apostle again sets

forth the whole process thus: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

The work of the Holy Ghost is not the less sovereign because it is he who "opens" (Ps. cxix. 18) and "enlightens" (Ephes. i. 18) the understanding, without which we could not see or know what is truth. Still, faith is the gift of God by the grace of the Holy Ghost, though the exercise of it is the act of the soul.

3. This faith is wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost through certain means.

Though we cannot doubt that there is an immediate work of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, we are taught that this new life is given through the truth, as man in the beginning was created by the word of God. Thus we are said to be "born of the word of God" (1 Pet. i. 23), to be "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 3), which is the great confirmatory fact of the gospel. The word of God is "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephes. vi. 17), and the gospel is sent to every creature. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 14-17), for how can we believe in him of whom we have not heard? We have no reason to expect the grace of the Holy Ghost except through the truth.

This brings us to consider,

SECONDLY: *The means of faith.*

"The Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments."

Our instructor makes a distinction between "work-

ing faith" and "confirming" it. The gospel is the testimony which we are to believe, the sacraments are the corroboration or assurance of that testimony to us. In the words of an old divine (good Bishop Jewell): "As princes' seals confirm and warrant their deeds and charters, so do the sacraments witness to our conscience that God's promises are true and shall continue forever. Thus doth God make known his secret purpose to his church: First, he declareth his mercy by his word, then he sealeth it and assureth it by his sacraments. In the word we have his promises, in the sacraments we see them." Thus, 1. The gospel is the truth which we are to believe. 2. The sacraments confirm it to us.

1. The gospel is the truth which we are to believe.

When our instructor speaks of the preaching of the gospel, he does not mean only the preaching of his human ministers, though that is a principal means by which he gives the blessing of truth (1 Cor. i. 21); but he properly includes the manifestation of the gospel by the word of God. For the whole Scripture testifies of Christ (Luke xxiv. 25-27). The gospel was preached unto Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law (Gal. iii. 8), and to the antediluvian sinners (1 Pet. iii. 18, 19), and even at the gate of Paradise in the first promise (Gen. iii. 15). The gospel, therefore, is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

We are to receive the Scriptures as the truth of God, because, as none but God can know the will of God, none but God can make his will known to us.

We are to believe all the Scriptures, because God has revealed to us all the truth they contain as necessary to a sufficient knowledge of himself, ourselves, and his will concerning us.

We are to receive in religious faith no testimony but that of God, because no other testimony is a warrant for religious truth; and our Lord expressly condemns the Pharisees of his time for mingling traditions of men with the commandments of God (Mark vii. 7); and the apostle bids us "beware lest any man spoil us . . . after the traditions of men" (Col. ii. 8).

We are to believe the word of God heartily, the word of God wholly, and the word of God only, as the true, perfect, and sole rule of Christian faith and practice (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17). We of the Reformed churches allow no other gospel than that which is taught in the holy Scriptures. None are subdued unto God by any other means than the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. None grow in grace but as they grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ set forth by the Scriptures. There is no means of sanctification but the truth of the word of God, as our Saviour prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17).

2. The sacraments confirm the gospel to our souls.

Here three questions arise, which are severally answered by our instructor: 1. What is a sacrament? 2. To what end are they appointed? 3. How many are there?

1. What is a sacrament?

"The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals appointed of God."

The word *sacrament* is not in the Scriptures, but is a Latin term adopted by the early Christians to signify what in the Greek original is called a *mystery*. *Mystery* is a term used by the Greeks in their false worship to signify a ceremony teaching or illustrating a religious

doctrine to the worshipper. Strangers, or ignorant persons, were not admitted to a share in such mysteries, but only those who were devoted to the study and practice of religion. A sacrament, therefore, as translating mystery, meant a ceremony illustrating religious doctrine. There were some particular uses of the word among the Romans, as an oath, a pledge, &c., but the early church gave it the sense which its derivation warrants. Our instructor accurately defines what we as Christians understand by sacraments: "Holy visible signs and seals appointed of God . . . to declare and seal more fully to us the promise of his gospel."

a. A sacrament is a holy *sign*, or a sign having a holy or religious character.

It is an outward, sensible form or ceremony, in which there is a manifest likeness to, or representation of, the grace presented to our faith. Thus, the washing of baptism presents in a lively figure the cleansing of our souls by the grace of Christ; and the provisions of the Lord's supper the nourishment of our souls by the doctrine of Christ and our communion or fellowship with his true body. If there be no such illustrative sign, there is no sacrament.

b. A sacrament is a *seal* confirming the gospel, whose grace it represents.

It is more than a mere sign, for it is an application of grace to every sincere, intelligent partaker of it; as God said of circumcision, which was a sacrament of the Old Testament church: "This is my *covenant* between me and you, and thy seed after thee, Every man-child among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. xvii. 10). A due performance of that rite was, according to the appointment of God, a reception of his own seal to the

truth of his promise; so, by the appointment of God, do the sacraments of the Christian church assure the grace which they represent to every one who truly receives them. We, by using the sacraments in a belief of his promise, offer our hearts to God; and he, through the sacraments, seals the grace upon our hearts, not indeed by the outward action, but by the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying it.

c. A sacrament is a sign and seal *appointed of God*.

None but God can ordain the method of our religious service, because he only is the object of such service. We have, therefore, no right to use any form or ceremony in his church which he has not ordained. It is the word of Christ commanding us to be "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," which makes the application of water, in that holy name, to the believer and his seed, a sacrament. It is the word of Christ commanding us to do in remembrance of him, which makes a participation of bread and wine as representatives of his broken body and shed blood, a sacrament. That is no sacrament which has not been expressly instituted by him. In the language of Augustine, as adopted by the protestant doctors: "Join the word of Christ's institution with the sensible creature (or sign), and thereof is made a sacrament."

2. To what end are the sacraments appointed?

"They are," says our instructor, "appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz: that he grants us freely the remission of sin and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross."

The thirty-third article of our confession is fuller and yet more explicit: "We believe that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities, hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us his promises, and to be pledges of the good-will and grace of God toward us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith: which he hath joined to the word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses both that which he signifies to us by his word, and that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us."

The purpose of the sacraments is to confirm our faith in the promises of the gospel. This they do, not of themselves, but by the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying them to every true partaker of them.

a. They represent to our senses by significant emblems the doctrine of Christ's grace. Because of our spiritual weakness and ignorance of spiritual things, God has condescended to arrest the attention of our senses themselves by these perceptible signs or emblems of the truth which he addresses to our minds, that so our senses may assist our minds in meditating upon and understanding the truth. We find the necessity of illustrating spiritual things by figures taken from natural things constant, for our very language is framed chiefly to speak of what we perceive outwardly by our senses. Our divine Master and the Holy Ghost, throughout the Scriptures, have regard to our infirmities by explaining "heavenly things" by "earthly" (John iii. 12). The sacraments are such figures made visible by actual ceremony. Thus the remission of sins and sanctification of the soul by the atonement of Christ, and the power of

the Spirit, is called a washing, a sprinkling, a cleansing. This mercy of God is, therefore, represented to our senses by the application of water, that so our attention may be fixed upon the spiritual truth. The Saviour declares that his doctrine, the word of God by him, is the proper nourishment of the soul, as bread invigorates and wine refreshes the body; and, therefore, the sacrament of the supper presents to us broken bread and poured-out wine, that so we, as we receive them, may be reminded of our constant dependence upon Christ's work and doctrine and spirit, for our spiritual life, until he comes again to receive us unto himself. The sacraments add nothing to the truth itself, but assist us in understanding it more clearly, and in applying it to ourselves more closely.

b. The sacraments are open exhibitions to others of that covenant by which believers are united with God in Christ, and through Christ with his true body, his church.

Christ has chosen his people to be witnesses for him of his grace. They are to make known his gospel to the world, and to unite with and assist each other for that end. Therefore, he commands them to come out from the world and be separate; to take up the cross, and follow him; and to have fellowship one with another. It is necessary, then, that this distinction from the world and this union with each other, as believers and servants of Christ, should be openly professed and exhibited; that there should be some outward sign of their faith and love, some expressive representation of that which they acknowledge in their hearts. For how shall the world know that there is a church, if it remain invisible? How shall Christians know that they

have brethren in Christ, if they do not confess themselves? How shall they testify to the faith of Christ, except before men? Thus, in baptism, the believer declares that he dedicates himself, or, so far as a parent can act for his child, his offspring to the service of Christ, upon the washing of whose blood he relies for the remission of sins. In the Lord's supper, he ratifies his promise of fidelity to Christ, and acknowledges a brotherly fellowship with the people of Christ, who surround as one family the holy table, and partake of the same bread and cup, the sensible emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, thereby uniting themselves to each other as they are united to their common head. Christians show forth all this to the world by sacraments, illustrating it in a most lively manner; and by so doing they are confirmed in their faith, not only by the representation made, but by the fact that they obey the command of Christ their Lord.

c. The sacraments and pledges of the grace of Christ testifying his spiritual presence with his church until he come.

When God instituted circumcision, he said: "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised." (Genesis xvii. 9, 10.) That is to say, every time the parent, in obedience to the divine command, and reliance upon the divine promise, should circumcise a child, thereby dedicating him to God, God would ratify on his part the covenant made with Abraham for himself and his seed, until the promise of the Saviour should be fulfilled. In like manner God

commanded the Passover to be kept as a perpetual ordinance (Exodus xii. 24), that, being reminded of the deliverance wrought for them out of the hands of the Egyptians, the Israelites might acknowledge and put their trust in God as their constant protector and redeemer. So, every time that the sacraments are administered, does Christ renew and confirm his covenant, setting forth his spiritual presence and power to wash away sin and to keep his people. For although baptism, being the ordinance initiatory to the visible church, may not be administered more than once to the same person, yet are we reminded of our own baptism, and of the grace of Christ signified by it, whenever before the church it is administered to another, while of the Lord's supper we are required often to partake, not only in remembrance of Christ's death, but in hope of his coming and belief of his presence, as we learn from the nature of the ordinance and the words of the apostle Paul: "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). It is the commemoration of his death, with sensible signs of his presence, and until he come. Whoever by faith receives the sacraments, does in so doing receive personally the promise and grace of the Saviour represented in them, and as a member of his church has a confirmation of Christ's grace to the church.

3. How many sacraments are there?

"Two: namely, Holy Baptism, and the Holy Supper."

There is no need of argument to prove this assertion of our instructor, for only baptism and the Lord's supper have the marks and institution by Christ, which we

have shown to characterize a sacrament. So taught the early fathers, as Augustine, Ambrose, and many before them; for although some of them speak of other religious things sometimes as sacraments, they meant only that they were sacred mysteries, but not sacraments as we have defined them. Even the Papists, who call *confirmation*, *penance*, *extreme unction*, *m matrimony*, and *holy orders*, sacraments, do not, according to their learned authors, consider them as fully sacraments as baptism and the Lord's supper, but eminently sacred things. So Bessarion says, "We read that these two only sacraments were delivered as plainly in the gospel." The entire Protestant church is agreed in receiving these two only as sacraments.

Let us, therefore, learn from the whole subject—

1. Our entire dependence upon the grace of the Holy Ghost for faith, in its beginning, growth, and perfection. It is an essential part of that sanctifying salvation, which God bestows through Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. Neither the word of the gospel which proclaims salvation, nor the sacraments which seal and confirm the word, can avail us anything, except the Holy Ghost communicates with them, and through them, his saving energy.

2. The truth of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments is the sole instrument of our salvation.

It is only by our belief of that word God has promised to sanctify our heart; and, therefore, no grace is communicated through any ceremony or form, however sacred, not even the sacraments, except we have a believing apprehension of the truth represented by them. The grace of the sacraments is not in the

water, or the bread and wine, which are only external, corporeal signs, but in the truth they present to every soul who obediently receives them.

3. The great purpose of both word and sacraments is to direct us "to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation."

We are not to rely upon any reading of the word, or participation of the sacraments, or upon any ceremony we perform, or any work that we do, for our salvation; they are only the means which show us the true ground of our faith, the sufficient finished work of Christ. It is a base and heathenish abuse of the means of grace, if we turn them into objects of trust, instead of Christ.

4. Our duty and encouragement to use diligently the means of grace, especially the word of God and the sacraments.

Though we are entirely dependent upon the grace of the Holy Ghost, yet doth God require of us our own efforts to attain his salvation. He has commanded us to search his Scriptures, to be baptized, and to observe the sacramental feast in remembrance of the death of Christ. Through these means, the word in making known his promises, and the sacraments in confirming them, he has promised to answer our prayers for his divine assistance. Our neglect to use the appointed means of blessing, is, therefore, a refusal of the blessing itself; but when we use them, we do, by faith and in obedience to him, open into our souls the channels of his saving grace. His promise is to the believing, and the proof of faith is obedience. To disobey God, in not using the means of grace, is to

shut ourselves out of the promise ; to obey him in these sacred duties, is not, indeed, to merit any favor, but it is to do that in the doing of which he is graciously pleased to confer his favor only for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord, our righteousness and strength.

LECTURE XXXII.

BAPTISM.

No. I.

ITS AUTHORITY AND DESIGN.

TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S
DAYS.

BAPTISM.

I.—ITS AUTHORITY AND DESIGN.

TWENTY-SIXTH LORD'S DAY.

QUEST. LXIX. *How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?*

ANS. Thus: that Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

QUEST. LXX. *What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?*

ANS. It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice on the cross; and, also, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ; so that we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

QUEST. LXXI. *Where has Christ promised us that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?*

ANS. At the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The promise is also repeated, where the Scripture calls baptism, "the washing of regeneration," and "the washing away of sins."

TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S DAY.

QUEST. LXXII. *Is, then, the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?*

ANS. Not at all; for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin.

QUEST. LXXIII. *Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call baptism "the washing of regeneration" and "the washing away of sins"?*

ANS. God speaks thus not without great cause; to wit, not only thereby to teach us, that the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ, but especially that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really as we are externally washed with water.

QUEST. LXXIV. *Are infants also to be baptized?*

ANS. Yes; for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God, and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost is promised to them no less than to the adult, they must, therefore, by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be admitted into the Christian church, and be distinguished from the children of infidels; as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant.*

THE lesson before us includes the whole doctrine of Christian baptism, to a somewhat enlarged, though still concise exposition of which our thoughts will now be directed.

It must be remembered throughout our study of the Catechism, that the person questioned is supposed to be a truly regenerate Christian, who has had in his own experience the proof of the divine truths which his answers set forth. This will account for the positive and assured manner of his claiming a personal concern in the several blessings of a Christian life.

For the sake of greater convenience in our analysis and explanation of the matter here treated by the church, let us arrange the whole under the following heads:—

FIRST: *The authority for our use of Christian baptism.* SECONDLY: *The design of Christian baptism.*

* We take these two sections together, because, though divided for the convenience of recitation on successive Lord's Days, and the subject requires more than one discourse, we cannot treat of it properly without referring to the matter contained in both at each stage of the exposition.

THIRDLY: *The mode of its administration.* FOURTHLY: *The subjects to whom it should be administered.*

FIRST: *The authority for our use of Christian baptism.*

Baptism, simply speaking, is *the application of water*, as in the act of washing or cleansing; *Christian baptism* is *the application of water to a person "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* "I indeed," said John the Baptist, "baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke iii. 16). This shows that the significance of baptism lies in the application of the element to the person, not of the person to the element. "Go ye, therefore," said our Lord to his apostles, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). This shows that the pronouncing of the words prescribed, at the time of applying the element, is necessary to the sacrament; indeed, it were else utterly unmeaning. That water is the proper and only element to be used, we learn from many Scriptures, especially from that giving an account of the Ethiopian eunuch, baptizing (Acts viii. 36-38); and the question of Peter, the apostle, before baptizing the household of Cornelius: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts x. 47.) The definition we have given may, therefore, suffice until we come to speak more particularly of the mode in which baptism should be administered. The authority for our use of this external baptism, or the propriety of our administering it, is

not questioned by any known portion of such as call themselves Christians, except the Society of Friends; but, as we derive our warrant for any Christian custom only from the word of God, let us refer to that absolute and infallible oracle.

I. The command of our Lord, the head of his church, cited but a moment since, is positive. He enjoined upon his disciples to baptize, as certainly as he did to teach, all nations. This sacrament, therefore, with the preaching of the gospel, lies at the foundation of the Christian church. Wherever the word of Christ is proclaimed and men are "discipled," or truly learn and believe the glad tidings, baptism is to be administered.

II. That the ordinance was not temporary, or only for the beginning of the church, is clear from the promise annexed, which shows the duration of the command: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," or the consummation of the present economy (Matt. xxviii. 20). Until all nations shall have been "discipled," and the Redeemer's kingdom on earth made complete by the universal triumph of his gospel, his word is to be preached and baptism continued with it. This is farther confirmed by

III. The inspired practice of the primitive church. The administration of baptism was not restricted to the hands of the apostles, but all the authorized preachers of the gospel appear to have baptized also. Thus Philip, first ordained a deacon, but afterwards, as we may suppose, advanced to be an evangelist, since the deacon's office (purposely distinct from that of those who gave themselves "continually to prayer and the ministry of the word") was the care of the poor (Acts

vi. 2-4), baptized many in Samaria, the Ethiopian eunuch, and doubtless a multitude of other converts, under his successful ministry (viii. 27-38). Paul was baptized at Damascus (ix. 18) three years before he ever saw a brother apostle (Gal. i. 17, 18); and he afterwards speaks of the Corinthian Christians as having been baptized, although he himself had baptized none of them but Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 13-16); so he says to the Galatian converts and to all Christians: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27), implying that only they who had been baptized had put on Christ; which accords with Christ's own declaration, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16), and the command of the apostle Peter at the Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts ii. 38). This practice of baptizing every person who desired to confess the Christian faith, thus indubitably observed during the apostolic age, was maintained by the whole Christian world, until the preaching of George Fox, about the middle of the seventeenth century; nor has it ever been questioned but by his disciples.*

SECONDLY: *The design of Christian baptism.*

It being the purpose of God in Christ to constitute his church visibly on earth, certain visible, palpable rites, or acted forms, became necessary, by which his

* This statement needs some qualification, if we allow the Valentinians and Manicheans to have been Christians. There was also a Carthaginian woman, Quintilla, who preached that baptism was useless, and who had some followers. The Messalians, a small absurd sect, are thought by some to have rejected baptism, but it is not certain. See *Wall*, Part II. ch. 5.

gracious will concerning his people should be expressed on his part, and recognized on theirs. Such forms, in addition to the sure divine word of prophecy, were extensively provided under the Old Testament, by ordaining which God visibly prefigured the blessings of salvation, and by using which the true Israelite avowed his faith in the implied promises. They were, therefore, manifest seals of his covenant with them and of their covenant with him. The dispensation of the New Testament, or covenant, being eminently spiritual, and the way of salvation fully declared by the work of Christ, as set forth in the evangelical Scriptures, but more especially by the enlarged testimony of the Holy Ghost to our hearts, the rites commemorative of Christ were not required to be so many as those which, now done away by their fulfilment in Christ, had before prefigured him. Nay, though some such forms were necessary, our Lord was careful to teach us that his religion is not in form, but spirit, by ordaining (as has been shown, twenty-fifth Lord's Day) only two, and those of the most simple character.

As, also, the gospel was first preached to the Jews, and the rites of the Old Testament were, though typical, eloquently illustrative of the gospel, our Lord in his condescending wisdom chose for his church such sacramental signs and seals as nearly resembled those of the obsolete dispensation. The two great sacramental types were circumcision and the passover: the first being the introduction of the new-born Israelite, or of the adult proselyte, to the blessings of the external covenant; the second, a personal confirmation of the covenant to and by the circumcised one. Circumcision signified "the putting away of the filth of the flesh"

(1 Pet. iii. 21); but this was also signified by the "divers washings" (Heb. ix. 10), principally sprinkling of water and the blood of sacrifices. The passover, in which the sacrificed lamb, whose sprinkled blood saved the first-born of Israel from the destroying angel, was partaken of as food by the worshippers, typified Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose blood is the salvation of his people from the wrath of God, of which deliverance all who believe in him are partakers, as a family in common; but this redemption was also signified by all Levitical sacrifices of atonement. Thus, circumcision and the passover comprehended in their significance all the rites of the ancient economy, they together having in them the ideas of covenant, cleansing, redemption, and fellowship. The Lord's supper, as we shall have farther occasion to show, was ordained in the place of the Paschal ceremony; our Lord having first stripped it of all pomp and unnecessary circumstance, according to the simplicity of his gospel, and made it as simple as a household meal, the beautiful sacrament of household love.

Baptism was ordained in the place of circumcision. That was a painful ordinance (Ex. iv. 25, 26), and, therefore, unsuited to the mercy of the gospel. Besides, while signifying the cleansing of the flesh, it had another meaning, rendered obsolete by the coming of Christ: the promise of the Messiah through the propagation of Abraham's covenanted race. The other contemporaneous sign of cleansing, *washing*, or more frequently *sprinkling* (water being commanded in the place of blood, because the sacrifice had ceased), was chosen as the primary sacrament. The idea of covenant was also preserved by this symbolical washing, as

we read that Moses, after the giving of the moral law, "took the blood" "of peace-offerings" "and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. xxiv. 5-8). It is proper for you to mark here, though we shall speak of it again, how very simple and stripped of all other ceremony is the ordinance of baptism according to our Lord's institution of it, — as simple as the washing or sprinkling with water.

We are now better prepared to see what was the end our Lord proposed in ordaining the sacrament of Christian baptism for the confirmation of our faith; and, following the order of our catechetical instructor, we shall first observe what it is, and *then*, what it is not.

I. The first question may be met by saying that Christian baptism is *a sign, a seal, and a profession*: a *sign*, as it is significant of certain truths; a *seal*, as it is an assurance of certain benefits; and a *profession*, as the recipient on his own part makes a profession to the church, and the church by baptizing him makes a profession to him on behalf of God.

1. Christian baptism is a sign, being significant of certain truths.

What these truths are, we gather from the Answers to the 69th and 70th Questions: —

"*How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?*"

"Thus: that Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am

washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away."

"*What is it to be washed with the blood and spirit of Christ?*"

"It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ; that we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives."

The whole may be summed up as declaring the acceptableness of believing sinners to God the Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. So we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For, although our eternal life comes from the Godhead, each of the persons constituting, in our blessed Trinity, the one God, has his peculiar office, according to the plan of redemption: the Father representing the authority and honor of the Godhead; the Son, as the incarnate mediator, making the atoning provision for the acceptance of his people; and the Holy Ghost, by his almighty energy, applying to the elect the benefits purchased by the Son, and conferred by the Father.

a. Christian baptism signifies the acceptableness of believing sinners to God the Father. Believers in the gospel receive "power (or the prerogative) to become the sons of God" (John i. 12). This adopted sonship is a restoration, though in a higher degree, of the sonship to God which man had before he fell. That relation he lost by sin; consequently, when his sin is expiated, pardoned, or washed away, he is restored to his place in the family of God. Hence, baptism is said to

be, or rather it signifies, [for, strictly, the expression of the apostle Paul (Titus iii. 5) refers to the grace, and not the sacramental sign,] "The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The penitent is introduced to a new life, eternal life, having been begotten and born again by the power of God to be his Son; so he receives the washing to signify the change from the sin which made him offensive, to the righteousness which makes him acceptable, in the sight of God. All the advantages of adoption are promised by the adopting act; so the church says in her baptismal form: "When we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and, therefore, will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil, or turn it to our good."

b. Christian baptism signifies the shedding of Christ's blood in his one sacrifice on the cross for the remission of sins. The life of the sinner, being forfeited to the law, could be redeemed only by the life of his surety or substitute, for the penalty must be satisfied. Hence, Christ died for us; and as, according to the Scripture, the blood is the life (Lev. xvii. 11), the shedding of his blood is put for the offering of his life, that is, for his death. Thus, all the typical sacrifices of atonement were sacrifices of life, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). The blood of the offered victim was, in the great sacrifice of atonement, sprinkled upon the propitiatory or covering of the ark which contained the broken law, "for an atonement," "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all

their sins" (Lev. xvi. 16). Where the sacrifice was for an individual, the blood of the victim, poured out upon the altar, was specially sprinkled by the priest on the person of the sinner. Thus baptism brings to mind both the pouring out of Christ's blood before God as a propitiation to the broken law, and the special benefit of that blood to each individual penitent. Guilt (or liability to punishment) is throughout the Scripture considered as defilement; so the taking away of guilt is aptly expressed by washing, to represent which, simple sprinkling was considered, under the Old Testament, sufficient, as the Reformed churches hold it to be under the New. From the sacrificial substitution of Christ for his people flow all the benefits obtained by his representative work; hence, the church in her baptismal form says: "When we are baptized in the name of the Son, the Son sealeth unto us that he doth wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins and accounted righteous before God."

c. Christian baptism signifies the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost.

As has been stated, it is the doctrine of Scripture that the blessings of redemption are applied to the soul by the personal agency of the Holy Ghost. Thus the apostle, speaking of the whole church, says: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," *i. e.* the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13); again: "Through him (Christ) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). The regeneration, by which the sinner becomes a child of God, is the work of the Spirit: "Except a man be

born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5-7). The washing away of sins with the blood of the cross is by the Holy Spirit. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). The blood of Christ is the instrument of the washing; the Holy Spirit is the agent, or the washer. The Holy Spirit seals, or marks as set apart or sanctified, to God, those who believe. "In whom (Christ), after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, (or promised Spirit,) which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 13, 14). Besides the washing of remission, by which the guilt of Christ's people is taken away, there is also a washing away by the Spirit of the pollution which sin leaves upon the soul, ordinarily and technically called sanctification. The consequence of this latter cleansing, joined to the regenerating, enlightening, and strengthening influences of the Spirit, is the production and gradual but sure growth of all those graces or virtues of religion which constitute the Christian character, until it is complete in glory; which graces are, therefore, called "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22, 23). All these several operations of the Spirit are signified in baptism. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" fire expressing the intense energy of the Spirit to purify (Luke iii. 16). The baptism of John was (imperfectly) Christian baptism, because it referred to Christ; but it was not Christian baptism complete or in full, for it did not refer to the Holy

Ghost. Hence the apostles and those with them in the chamber of the Pentecost, who, doubtless, had received the preliminary baptism of John, were not baptized again with water, because they had the baptism of the Holy Spirit itself; but, as we read in Acts xix. 1-5, those, who had received John's baptism and not the Holy Ghost, were baptized again. So the apostle Peter said to the mixed multitude: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 38, 39). The promise, in order to receive which they were to be baptized, was that of the Holy Ghost (compare 33d with 16-18): "It shall come to pass in those days that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel ii. 28). A similar promise of the Spirit, as represented in baptism, was given by Isaiah (xliv. 3): "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon their offspring;" and also by Ezekiel (xxxvi. 25-27): "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments and do them." Thus, in the application of the water is the pouring out or sprinkling seen. Hence the church in her baptismal form says: "When we are

baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us by this holy sacrament, that he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."

2. Christian baptism is a *seal*, as it is an assurance of certain benefits. A seal is added and attached to a written deed, as an attestation of the covenant. A sacrament does not reveal the benefits of grace; that is done by the word; but it confirms the testimony of the word. A sacrament is not itself a covenant; that is already made; but it is a seal or assurance of the covenant (twenty-fifth Lord's Day); thus the apostle, speaking of Abraham, says: "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised" (Rom. iv. 11). The covenant was made with him while yet uncircumcised; then circumcision was added as a seal or visible assurance. But a seal without a covenant has neither value or meaning; so, except there be first a covenant with God, baptism, though externally applied, assures nothing. It is a seal only of the righteousness of faith. But when there is faith to apprehend the covenant, then baptism is a sure seal and pledge of the benefits covenanted. Hence the Christian disciple in our Catechism, believing the promise of the gospel covenant, hesitates not to say: "I am as certainly washed by the blood and Spirit of Christ from all pollution of my soul, that is from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water." So, also, in the baptismal form,

the church, *taking for granted faith in the covenant*, says: "Baptism is a seal and undoubted (rather indubitable) testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God;" and in the thanksgiving, after the baptism of the infants of believers, bids us say: "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise thee that thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and received us through thy Holy Spirit as members of thy only-begotten Son, and adopted us to be thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism." All these enumerated blessings are promised unto faith: if we have faith, baptism seals them unto us; if we have not faith, we have no right to the baptism, which supposes a previous covenant; for, in such case, baptism is unmeaning and valueless, as a seal without an instrument or deed.

What baptism seals has been shown in what it signifies; for the seal and the sign are for the same things.

a. When we are baptized in the name of the Father, it seals to us our adoption by God as his children.

b. When we are baptized in the name of the Son, it seals to us the remission of our sins through his blood.

c. When we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, it seals to us all the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.

3. Christian baptism is a profession, or formal, open declaration of the truths thus signified and sealed.

As the church is visible, so the profession must be visible. Thus,

a. The recipient of baptism openly professes, not only his faith in the covenant of God to him, but his covenant to God, that he will be (1.) a child of God in

all holy obedience; (2.) a follower of Christ's doctrine and example; and (3.) a zealous cultivator of the Spirit's grace, without which he is nothing, and can do nothing. In brief, he avows himself to the church, and before the world, to be a Christian. As the church, in her sacramental form, says: "Whereas, in all covenants, there are contained two parts, therefore are we by God, through baptism, admonished of and obliged (*i. e.* put under obligations) unto new obedience: namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." This is our profession in receiving baptism.

b. The church, on the other hand, as in the place of God, professes unto the person baptized before the world, that he is received among the children of God, the followers of Christ, and the saints of the Holy Ghost, — that is, into the visible company of Christian believers.

Hence baptism has been universally regarded to be the initiatory rite to the Christian church, as circumcision was the rite initiatory to the former covenant.

II. What Christian baptism is not.

This second point of our proposed inquiry may be thought to have been sufficiently met in discussing the first; but the 72d and 73d Questions, with their Answers, show that our instructor means to rebuke the error of those who consider the outward sacrament of baptism a real washing away of sins and a regeneration by the Holy Ghost; or (what is nearly the same thing) that the graces of remission and regeneration certainly

accompany the outward sign. That no one may so abuse their souls, or pervert the language of our church, let us consider:

1. That "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," and the grace of the Holy Spirit alone renews the soul. The cleansing and the renewal are both spiritual and internal; nor can they possibly be effected in the soul by an outward application of water to the body.

2. That the sacrament, being only a sign and a seal, does not confer the blessings, either by itself or by accompanying grace, but supposes the blessings to have been already conferred by a covenant already entered into.

3. That the texts of Scripture usually quoted to sustain these heterodox opinions, are misinterpreted. Thus:

a. The text is cited from the epistle to Titus: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (iii. 5). Our instructor rightly supposes that baptism, here meant, is referred to only as figuratively signifying, and, to the believer, sealing the grace of the Holy Ghost; but that the form does not confer the grace, is strongly asserted by the apostle when he says that we are saved only according to the "mercy" of God, and "not by works of righteousness" (by which the usage of Paul was to designate ceremonial compliances) which we have done or can do.

b. The second text cited is in the address of Ananias to Saul (Acts xxii. 16): "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

By this is meant that he should, in receiving baptism, give open token that he believed his sins to be washed away, and so be confirmed in his faith by the sign and the seal. If the expression be taken as absolutely literal, he was commanded to wash away his own sins by the sacramental waters, — a stretch of interpretation few are willing to take, as our sins are washed away only by the Holy Ghost with the blood of Christ, and as no one washes himself in baptism, but the recipient is washed.

c. Our Lord's words to Nicodemus are sometimes quoted in this connection: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." There are good doubts whether baptism (outward) is here referred to at all; but assuming that it is, there are two births spoken of: of water and of the Spirit; and it by no means follows that he who is born of water is necessarily born of the spirit, or that he who is born of the spirit is necessarily born of water. He must be born of each and of both. It is nowhere said, that he who is born of water has certainly entered the kingdom of God; but it is everywhere asserted, that to be born of the Spirit is to enter the divine kingdom. He who wilfully refuses to enter the kingdom of God upon earth by baptism, may well fear being refused admission to the kingdom above; but he who is truly born of the Spirit, is as truly a child of God and an heir of eternal life. One may be deprived of baptism by uncontrollable circumstances; but if he be born of the Spirit, his "record is on high."

d. One more text: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). This is not asserting that a baptized person is necessarily a believer;

on the contrary, it is added: "he that believeth not shall be damned," *i. e.* whether baptized or not. Faith certainly saves; baptism does not, except it be received in faith.

Let the apostle Peter sum up the matter: "Baptism now doth save us [not the putting away of the filth of the flesh (*or the external cleansing*), but the answer of a good conscience toward God] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter iii. 21). Reliance upon any external form is going back to the unspiritual, self-righteous superstition of the Jews under the old law; reliance on the grace of the Spirit in the gospel is the saving faith of the New Testament.

May God make us worthy partakers of his Spirit, and keep us faithful to our baptismal obligations! Amen.

LECTURE XXXIII.

BAPTISM.

No. II.

THE MODE.

TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S
DAYS.

BAPTISM.

II. — THE MODE.

HAVING, in our former discourse, shown, FIRST: The *authority* for Christian baptism; and, SECONDLY: Its *design*; it now remains for us to consider, THIRDLY: The *mode* of its *administration*; and, FOURTHLY: The *subjects* to whom it should be *administered*.

THIRDLY: *The mode in which Christian baptism should be administered.*

We use the term *mode* here in a large sense, comprising by it everything connected with the administration of the sacrament, not treated under the other heads, as: I. The administrator. II. The circumstances. III. The formula. IV. The element to be used. V. The manner of applying it. In this order, as in our main arrangement, convenience is aimed at rather than a precise succession of thought.

I. The *administrator*, or the person who should officiate in conferring baptism.

The sacrament, being a sign and seal of divine grace, should be received as from the hand of God, represented by the officiating person. It is proper, therefore, that so solemn an act as affixing a seal in the name of God should be performed by no unaccredited agent; and as the ordinance is intended to confirm the

word of God, a belief of which is the qualification for rightly receiving baptism, we easily infer that those who are officially authorized to preach the word are the proper persons to administer the confirming sacrament. So we find the command to baptize joined by the Saviour with the command to preach the gospel, in the great commission. The same persons are directed to do both. The holy apostles were, and their successors in the office of preaching the gospel are, styled by the Holy Ghost "ambassadors for Christ," as though God spake by them (2 Cor. v. 20). They, therefore, have the delegated prerogative of confirming the truth which they are sent to proclaim. Hence, we have no recorded instance of any others administering baptism but authorized preachers of the gospel.

We have seen, also, that baptism is the open sign of admission into the church visible, and, therefore, the reception of the new member should be the act of one who by his office represents the church, viz: its bishop, *i. e.*, according to the language of Scripture, the presiding presbyter.

The question has been much vexed, both before and after the Reformation, whether baptism administered in a case of necessity by a layman, though acknowledged to be irregular, should not be regarded as so far valid that a repetition of the rite would be improper. The extreme — very just reluctance felt by a large majority of Christians to dishonor a sacrament, and the erroneous supposition of many that baptism is necessary to the assurance of salvation — has led the greater part to decide that lay-baptism should not be rejected. Our Reformed church teaches the contrary, both in her confession of faith (Article xxx.) and in her form for ordaining min-

isters of the word, where the office of administering the sacraments is especially ascribed to them. Such was the opinion of the famous Ursinus, the author of our Catechism, as it is of the Westminster confession, and of nearly all the evangelical denominations.

The personal immorality or insincerity of the officiator does not affect the validity of the ordinance, if he be regularly officiating at the time, for the act is official, not personal; nor does the otherwise heretical character of a church impair their baptism, if it be administered according to the apostolical usage, and with an orthodox belief respecting the divine nature and unity of the three ever-blessed persons named in conferring the sacred seal.

II. The *circumstances*.

Baptism being the sacrament of admission into the visible church, it is meet that it should be administered openly before the assembled church; that the church may own and the baptized person declare the covenant between them and him. Hence, when the persons interested are not prevented by sickness or other causes (not a false shame, which is unbecoming pride) from attending in the proper place of public worship, the rite should be performed there and at the time of public worship. But if it be performed more privately, there should at least be more than one Christian person present to constitute a church; and the officiating minister should, if possible, have a ruling elder with him for the same purpose, although, being himself both bishop and presbyter, he may, in extreme cases, act alone.

Every care should be taken that the ordinance be administered with all the reverence due in so solemn a

service, and attempts to make it an occasion of worldly festivity or show discouraged and forbidden.

III. The *formula*, or form of words, to be pronounced in administering the baptism, should be that prescribed by our Lord to the apostles, without omission, addition, or alteration. It were profane presumption to attempt any improvement upon Christ's prescription. But this does not forbid proper explanations, vows or prayers before, or thanksgiving with exhortations afterward, provided nothing be introduced that mars the solemnity of the ordinance or its primitive simplicity. The Reformed churches here explicitly reject signing the subject with the sign of the cross, because it has no apostolical authority; because the practice is derived from a superstitious communion, who attribute an unscriptural and idolatrous virtue to the use of that sign; and because, on the unauthorized pretence of increasing the impressiveness of the ceremony, it distracts attention and reliance from the simple baptism with water, as appointed by our Lord.

IV. The *element* to be used.

That this is pure water, has already been sufficiently shown from Scripture; and so all the Protestant churches use water alone; but the Papists most profanely and indecorously add oil and spittle and salt, which the Reformed churches protest against as an unseemly and idolatrous practice.

V. The *manner* of applying the water.

On this subject, you are aware, there has been much controversy, and therefore we are required to be explicit. Water may be applied to a person in three ways: by sprinkling, by pouring it upon him, or by plunging him in it. Our church states it to be "the

dipping in or sprinkling with water"; yet, while it is admitted that baptism by dipping in is valid, the practice of the church is to baptize by sprinkling, as equally valid, and for many reasons far preferable. No candidate for the ordinance is forbidden to be baptized by immersion, or being dipped; but our ministers generally, if not universally, would decline administering the ordinance in that manner, lest they should encourage an undue scrupulousness on a point which they consider unimportant and contrary to our well-considered, established usage. Nothing need be said of pouring, or effusion, as the principle is contained in the application by sprinkling. Yet, while thus charitable in allowing those who prefer immersion, or dipping, to follow their own method, we are not met with equal consideration, as a large and highly respectable body of Christians deny the validity of any baptism but immersion.

We justify the practice of our church by several arguments: 1. The meaning of the original words which are rendered "baptize," or "baptism," by the translators of our Bible. 2. The sufficiency of sprinkling to signify the thing intended. 3. The greater convenience, and, therefore, expediency of sprinkling.

1. The meaning of the original words which are rendered "baptize" and "baptism."

If these words necessarily, and only, mean *immersion*, the question should be yielded by us at once. But such is not their necessary and only meaning. The primitive, or radical sense, we admit, is *immersion*; but, like many other words in all languages, they came, by a common use of speech, to have other significations as well as that which was the radical, and among them washing, or the use of water for the purpose of cleans-

ing. Thus the evangelist Mark (vii. 1-4) tells us that the Pharisees were scandalized at our Lord's disciples because they did not, according to the tradition of the elders, wash their hands before eating, *i. e.* cleanse them with water. If, however, it be argued that the verb here means immersion, because they would naturally plunge their hands into water, how shall we apply the term throughout the fourth verse? "And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Cups may be dipped; so may pots and brazen vessels, if of a small size; but tables, or, more correctly, the couches on which the guests reclined around the table, were altogether too large to be dipped or plunged into water, and it would be difficult to imagine how they could have been cleansed in any other way than by the application of water to them. Besides, the washing there spoken of is clearly not an ordinary washing, such as takes place in every cleanly household, but a ceremonial custom to cleanse from ritual defilement the articles used; and we have seen already that such ceremonial cleansing might be effected, as it was in most cases, by mere sprinkling.

This interpretation is fully confirmed by the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 10-14), where the ceremonial cleanness is said to have "stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings, and carnal ordinances." Now, it is notorious that the larger part of those ceremonial "washings," or baptisms, consisted of sprinklings, or effusions of water or of blood. The writer is evidently speaking comprehensively of all the lustrations; not the few in which immersion was required, but the many in which sprinkling was sufficient to represent

washing; for he goes on to say: "But Christ, being come a high priest of good things to come . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Certainly, here is a continuation of reference to those of the "divers washings" with blood, which accompanied the entrance of the Levitical high priest to the Holy of Holies, all of which were performed by sprinkling; and the argument goes on: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Now, here we see that not only the term "baptism" includes the "sprinkling" under the law, but that baptism and sprinkling are used interchangeably, particularly when cleansing by the blood of Christ (which is signified in Christian baptism) is spoken of.* If sprinklings under the Old Testament are called baptisms, why may not sprinkling be considered baptism under the New? This is all we contend for, and the passage cited proves it fully. We may, however, add a proof or two more. John the Baptist, or baptizer, says: "I, indeed, baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Now, if the word *baptize* be rendered *immerse* in the former part of the verse, the latter clause should read, "He shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost and in fire," which is not ac-

* The same may be said of the other two instances in verse 19, and verses 24, 25, of same chapter.

ording to fact. Christ, as the head of his church, was baptized with the Holy Ghost as he came up from being baptized with water by John; but was it by immersion into the Holy Ghost? On the contrary, the Holy Ghost *descended* in a bodily shape "like a dove (*i. e.* with a fluttering motion like a dove when alighting), and lighting upon him" (Matt. iii. 16); so when he himself baptized his disciples at the Pentecost, we read that, "There *came* a sound *from heaven* as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it (*i. e.* the appearance like fire) sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii. 2-4). Here we see that, like their Master, they were baptized, not by being immersed into the Holy Ghost and the fire, but by the Holy Ghost being poured out or descending upon them, and in the form of fire resting upon them. This is in accordance with prophetic language, as the apostle Peter quoted it at the time (from Joel ii. 28-32): "It shall come to pass in those days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the primary baptism of Christ as an *anointing* (Isa. lxi. 1), which we know was done by pouring oil upon the head. If immersion were necessary to baptism, the disciples at the Pentecost were not baptized with the Holy Ghost, for the fire only sat upon them. If it be answered, that the Holy Ghost "filled all the house where they were sitting," we rejoin that it was the *sound* "as of a rushing mighty wind" that filled the place, not the wind; the visible element of the baptism was the appearance like fire, which did not fill

the place, but only rested in forms like cloven tongues of fire. Supernatural fire was, as you know, the sign or emblem of present divinity; and the expression "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" is a Hebraistic duplication or parallelism to express the same thing, while the purifying grace of the Holy Spirit is also brought into view. If, however, the immersionists insist upon it that the Holy Ghost, like a wind or vapor, filled the house, it does not relieve them from their embarrassment, but increases it; for to imitate exactly (as they say we should) the mode of this baptism, it were necessary, not simply to immerse the subject, but to pour water upon him until he is completely covered with the element, which I have never heard of their doing.

That baptism (the word) is not necessarily synonymous with immersion, is clear from 1 Cor. x. 1. "Moreover, brethren," the apostle there says, "... all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." As to the cloud, — doubtless the cloud of the divine presence, — all we read in the account of Moses is, that it removed from before the camp of Israel, and stood behind it, between them and the Egyptians (Ex. xiv. 19, 20). In so doing we may suppose it to have passed over the host of Israel. In Numbers (x. 34), we are told that it "was upon them by day," and (xiv. 14) that it stood "over them." Some think that the cloud sent forth rain; but the conjecture is far-fetched, for it was not a cloud of moisture, being a pillar of fire by night; nor do the texts, quoted to sustain the idea, bear upon the subject. It was, no doubt, like a thick smoke, hanging over them, or before or behind them like a cloud. But will any

one pretend that the Israelites were lifted up and plunged into it, which the immersionists say is necessary to baptism? On the contrary, even if it enveloped them, must it not have *descended* upon them, which we, in our baptism, make the water do? As "to the sea," we are expressly told that they went through it dry-shod, wet, at the utmost, merely by a sprinkling of spray from the rolled-back floods. If being wholly under water is necessary to baptism, the Egyptians only were baptized; the Israelites were not. Surely, no immersionist would consider it baptism to pass through a dry reservoir, or the dry bed of a stream which once had been full of water.

Much stress has been laid by immersionists on that passage of the apostle Peter, where he says, referring to the ark of Noah, "wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water: The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us; (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21). The inference is, however, wholly on our side. How did the water save Noah and his family? By literally covering them all over? Certainly not; but by bearing up the ark in which they were, so that the waters did not touch them, except perchance in the descending rain or the dashing spray. The sinners of the old world were so immersed or covered with water, and were drowned in consequence. The truth is, the apostle does not speak of the mode at all, but only of the grace signified by baptism.

This last remark is equally applicable to those passages which speak of Christians as having "put on

Christ" by baptism (Gal. iii. 27); being "buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. vi. 4), and rising with him again (Col. ii. 12). There is more poetry (and not good poetry either) than logic in running a fanciful parallel between going under the water, to come out of it in a moment, and the burial of Christ in a rock, until his resurrection on the third day. Dramatically, death on a cross is but remotely represented by death under water. The scriptural doctrine is, that the believer by faith is united to Christ as his representative, and, therefore, is "crucified with Christ," "risen with Christ," "glorified with Christ." The reception of baptism declares his faith, and seals him with the outward sign of Christ's people, no matter in what manner the sacramental emblem be applied.

For the same reason we regard as of little importance the precise mode in which baptism was administered by John or the early ministers of Christ, whether by immersion or sprinkling. A mode may have been convenient for them, which is very awkward, and sometimes dangerous, for us. It is enough that we use water sufficiently as a sign. Yet we are far from admitting that baptism was then, at least, always administered by immersion. It is notorious that the Greek prepositions rendered "*into*" and "*out of*" (the water) may also be rendered *to* and *from*. Yet, even were they confined to the former meaning, it does not prove that the subject was immersed; as, had they been baptized by sprinkling, it would have been more convenient both for the administrator and the subject to gather up their loose garments from their lower limbs, and putting off their sandals, — the only covering they wore on their feet, — step a little way into the

water, especially when, as was the case with the Jordan, the banks were steep. This is the way in which baptism is represented by some old pictures, and certainly must have been more pleasant in that warm climate than is a plunge through the ice, on a winter's day, in ours. As to the duty of following our Lord into the water, it is a mere play upon words; for we do not follow our Lord in John's baptism, but in his baptism by the Holy Ghost, which he received after coming up from the water.

Yet, should we grant that John baptized only by immersion, it does not follow that all the Christian baptisms spoken of were administered in the same way.

At the Pentecost three thousand persons were baptized in one day, and that between the third and ninth hours (Acts ii. 15; iii. 1). Can it be believed that so many were plunged under water within six hours, even were the Twelve assisted by the Seventy, of which we have no account? We are told that John baptized "in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John iii. 23). Much water was necessary, say our immersionists, because he baptized by plunging; but had he only sprinkled them, a little water would have sufficed for never so great a multitude. But was there much water in Jerusalem? It was tolerably well supplied for ordinary purposes from cisterns and a few pools; but is it probable that the new sect would have been permitted to defile all the water in the city by dipping in it such a multitude? or that the multitude, both men and women, were prepared (as our friends on the other side always take care to be) with dry garments and even water-proof boots, for

the officiating minister, and convenient places to change their garments after their plunge? Baptism by sprinkling could have been administered with decent solemnity, but what indecent confusion must have resulted from dipping so many. Is it not strange that we have no account of the place or places where the rite was administered, if the precise mode were so important?

Similar difficulties belong to other instances, as we are not told, on any of the several occasions, where the new converts were or could have been plunged. In the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, we know that the only water along his route through the desert of Gaza was the little stream now called *Wel-Hary*, which, though it may have been swollen during the rainy season, must have been, at the time he crossed, too shallow to allow the immersion of a man, to say nothing of the minor, but really awkward, difficulty attending the saturation of his clothes, unless he was dipped naked, a fashion followed by none in these days (Acts viii.). The jailer and his family were baptized in the prison after midnight, and could hardly have been immersed, unless we allow our Baptist friends to put a tank within the walls of a heathen jail, as they do in their convenient churches, for the purpose of baptism. As to their having gone to the river Strymon to baptize them, the distance from the city renders the supposition absurd (Acts xvi. 33). Is it not strange, we ask again, that the immersionist has not been supplied by the Scripture on a point he deems so momentous?

What means Peter's question, when about to baptize the household and friends of Cornelius: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized?" (Acts x. 47.) Is he not asking that water should be

brought in for the purpose? Would not an immersionist have said: "Can any man forbid that we should go to the water and baptize them?"

But enough of this. The thing is too puerile for the gravity of a Christian pulpit; and the discussion can be tolerated only because some good people have been strangely led into troubles of conscience on the subject.

2. The sufficiency of sprinkling to signify the thing intended.

For this we have the highest authority in Scripture. Baptism will, I trust, be acknowledged a symbolical washing or cleansing. Such symbolical cleansing was *always*, under the Old Testament, ordered to be performed by sprinkling. I do not quote, because the citations would be innumerable. There is not a single instance of any person being required to be immersed throughout the whole of the older Scriptures, except Naaman, who was neither a Jew nor a proselyte. The priests, before entering upon the special solemnities of the temple, were ordered to wash themselves thoroughly; but that was for personal cleanliness rather than a symbolical purification, else they would have been baptized often in a year. All the ceremonial cleansings were performed in our way. Great stress is laid by some upon the Jewish mode of baptizing proselytes, which was by immersion; but we deny that they had any divine authority for it. The Rabbins cite for the purpose Jacob's direction to his proselyted household: "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments" (Gen. xxxv. 2); and that of Moses to the Israelites, that they should "wash their clothes" (Ex. xix. 10); but neither of these orders the immersion of their bodies. A third

text they quote is one where the people were sprinkled (Ex. xxiv. 8), and that with blood. Shall we allow a tradition of pharisaical elders to bind the free church of God?

The Psalmist says: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (li. 7). Here, according to Hebrew parallelism, the idea of the first clause is repeated in the second; and he asserts that if purged with hyssop he would be thoroughly cleansed. But how was purification by hyssop performed? It was used in applying the blood of the paschal lamb to the lintels of the doorpost. "Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood . . ." (Ex. xii. 22); in the purification of a restored leper (Lev. xiv. 6, 7), and of a house that had had the plague (51); in the preparing of the water of separation (Num. xix. 6-21); and in each of these cases, that is to say, whenever hyssop was used, sprinkling was the method of application; so that a thorough cleansing was symbolized to the Psalmist's mind by sprinkling. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 18-22) we read that Moses "took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament (or covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you." If sprinkling were sufficient to signify the application of the blood of the Old Testament, is it not enough to signify that of the New? And, again, referring to the ceremonies of the high priest on the day of intercession, the writer of the same epistle says: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed (not dipped, mark you) with pure water" (x. 22). The washing here is certainly baptism, argues the immersionist. Grant that it be so; then *to baptize* means *to wash*. But, in fact, there is a parallelism here between the purification of the sinner's conscience and the sanctification of the outward person, by which we should understand, according to a New Testament idiom, the conduct of our lives (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 20). If sprinkling be sufficient to signify the thorough purifying of the conscience, it is enough to signify the washing of the body. So, again, we read (Heb. xii. 24) that we are come "to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel"; and the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 1, 2) speaks of the saints as elect, unto "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

This is in accordance with the language of prophecy: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean (If God says that we may be made clean by sprinkling, does it not savor of impiety to deny it?) from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you (*i. e.* by sprinkling clean water upon them); a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26). Here is everything signified in baptism represented by sprinkling. Are we too bold in claiming the text as a literal prophecy of Christian baptism administered after the proper mode? The prophet Isaiah (lii. 15) also says of the Messiah: "So shall he sprinkle many nations," alluding to the blessings of

salvation, as represented in baptism; and it is remarkable that the Ethiopian probably read this text just before he was baptized, as he asked Philip to explain the seventh verse after it. In another place, the same prophet says in the name of the Lord: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground" (xliv. 3); that is, he will rain down his blessings as from a full, over-hanging cloud. Thus, you see, whenever the blessings of salvation are spoken of in the Old or New Testament, whether typically, prophetically, or figuratively, they are said to be conferred by the symbolical act of sprinkling, or, in a few places, pouring. We may challenge the immersionists to bring an instance of its being represented by plunging, except, perchance, the somewhat doubtful reference of the pool of Bethesda. The figure of a "fountain opened," employed by Zechariah (xiii. 1), does not necessarily imply plunging, as one may wash at a fountain without going in it all over. According to the unanimous language of the sacred writers, sprinkling is not only significant, but by far the most significant mode of representing in baptism the blessings of salvation; nor is it consistent with Christian simplicity to force upon the church a form derived from the unauthorized traditions of the Jewish elders, the only source to which we can trace baptism by dipping. We are too charitable to deny that baptism by immersion is valid, inasmuch as water is used for the symbol; but we insist upon being permitted to follow "a more excellent way."

3. The greater convenience, and, therefore, expediency of sprinkling.

The greater convenience of our mode is so obvious, that I need not argue on it. Indeed, our Baptist

brethren do not hesitate to consider immersion a cross, and reproach us for not being willing to bear it. But we believe that we are called unto liberty, and that the cross of the Christian life lies in the self-denying practice of Christian virtues, — not in bodily exercises, which profit nothing, while they are apt to puff up with pride.

Therefore we practise, as most expedient and most consonant with the merciful character of the gospel, that method which is least trying to the health and modesty of administrator and subject, which may be practised at all times and in all countries, and with the most decency and ease, and which, above all, is the very method which a crowd of Scriptures recommend.

LECTURE XXXIV.

BAPTISM.

No. 3.

THE SUBJECTS.

TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S
DAYS.

BAPTISM.

III.—THE SUBJECTS.

IT remains for us to treat of, **FOURTHLY**: The *subjects* to whom Christian baptism should be administered.

From what has been said respecting the authority and design of this sacrament, it is clear that it should be administered to all adult believers who have not previously received the holy ordinance; but our church goes farther, and requires that the *infant offspring* of believers should also be baptized. This we hold in common with all Christians who practised baptism until comparatively modern times, and with the vast majority of Christians now.

The usage of infant baptism may be distinctly traced in Christian writers from the close of the apostolic age all the way down. Justin Martyr, who wrote his "Apology" about the middle of the second century after Christ, and when he must have been about fifty years old, speaking of those who belonged to the Christian church, says that among them were some "who had been made disciples of Christ from their childhood." The term which he employs to signify their being disciplined, is precisely that which we find in the original of our Lord's command to his apostles: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," *i. e.* *make disciples* of all nations, "baptizing them" (Matt. xxviii. 19); and as

the method prescribed was to baptize those who were discipled, we may safely understand Justin as asserting that the little children were baptized. Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John, writing nearly at the same time with Justin Martyr, says: "Christ came to save all who through him are re-born into God, — infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and older people." The expression "re-born into God," without doubt was meant by him to signify baptized, such being his habit of language. Tertullian, about two hundred years after Christ, had some erroneous notions respecting the peculiar enormity of sins committed after baptism; and advises that infants, if they are likely to die, should be baptized, but otherwise that baptism should be delayed until as late a period of life as possible. In this opinion, it is evident from what he says himself, that he differed from his fellow-Christians generally, who practised infant baptism. Origen, in the former part of the third century, tells us, that the church "derived an order from the apostles to baptize infants"; and again: "According to the custom of the church, baptism is administered to infants, who would not need the grace of baptism, if there was nothing in them that needed forgiveness and mercy." Cyprian, a contemporary of Origen, states that at a council, held in Carthage, A.D. 253, of sixty-six bishops or pastors of churches, one of their number proposed the question: Whether or not a child might be baptized before the eighth day after its birth, which was the time prescribed for circumcision? And the unanimous answer of the council was, "that the mercy and grace of God is to be withheld from no human being born; . . . that we

ought not to debar any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and good to us all; and this rule, as it holds good for all, we think more especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born." Surely, as Lord Chancellor King observes, "the unanimous voice of a synod, in such circumstances, denotes the common practice and usage of the church." Chrysostom, toward the close of the fourth century, speaking of circumcision, says: "Our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, cures without pain, and procures for us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit; and it has no fixed time, as circumcision had; but one that is in the beginning of his age, or one in the middle of it, or one that is in old age, may receive this circumcision without hands." Augustine, toward the beginning of the fifth century, says: "The whole church practises infant baptism. It was not instituted by councils, but was always in use." Writing against the Pelagians, one of his most strenuous arguments is, that infants would not be baptized if they had no sin." "They (the Pelagians) grant that infants must be baptized, not being able to resist the authority of the whole church, which was, doubtless, delivered by our Lord and his apostles." In another place, speaking of the proper persons to offer the children for baptism, who he thinks are the parents, if they be pious, he speaks with approbation of those Christians who presented the infants of their slaves, or foundlings, or orphans. Similar declarations are frequent in his works. Pelagius, his great opponent, a native of Britain, who had travelled through southern Europe to Africa and Jerusalem, exclaims indignantly: "Men slander me by the charge that I deny

baptism to infants." "I never heard of any one, not the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants; for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and so born again in Christ, and thus make them miss of the kingdom of God?" Many other testimonies might be added; but let it suffice to say that no fact in the history of the first four Christian centuries is more firmly established than the universal practice of infant baptism, except by a few, who postponed it like Tertullian for the reason given, or still fewer (of any deserving at all the name of Christian), who thought water-baptism useless.

From the time of Augustine downwards, there is not the slightest trace of an individual, much less of a sect, who denied infant baptism until the year A. D. 1120, when Peter de Bruis, one of the Waldenses, preached against it; but his followers, called after him Petrobrussians, were very few, and disowned by all the rest of that pious people, who, preserving amidst their mountains the faith derived through their ancestors from apostles, practised, as they practise now, this edifying rite of the Christian church.

So all the churches of the Reformation, though intent more or less upon stripping themselves of the corruptions which had obtained through popery, unanimously consented, as they now consent, to the propriety and authority of infant baptism, with the exception of the sect calling themselves rather arrogantly Baptists, originally known as Anabaptists (from their re-baptizing such as had been baptized when infants, or had been sprinkled), which arose amidst much extravagant fanaticism in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Here, then, we have the opinion of the whole Chris-

tian world from the apostolic age, both before and after the Reformation, — the Baptists excepted, who only within a few years have attained any considerable numbers, on the side of infant baptism. Our opponents cannot show us the slightest evidence that the practice was introduced at any time, though, had it been an innovation, it would have been noted, and must have caused discussion. The utter absence of all proof, or even surmise to the contrary, indicates that it has come to us from the apostles themselves. Besides, as has been urged, and in my judgment with irresistible force, the ordinance of baptism must have been, according to the views of our (so-called) Baptist friends, entirely lost. For, if no one is a member of the visible church unless baptized by immersion at an adult age, and consequently no one not so baptized can administer baptism, there were no legitimately baptized persons at the time the Anabaptists arose, nor had there been during many centuries before.

But we readily admit as sound the Protestant rule of acknowledging no evidence sufficient to establish a rule of Christian faith or practice except that of holy Scripture. What we have adduced from uninspired ecclesiastical history, though strongly corroborative of our practice, has been rather introductory to our argument than part of it; and now we follow our Catechist to the word of God.

"Quest. 74. *Are infants also to be baptized?*

"Ans. Yes; for since they, as well as adults, are included in the covenant and church of God, and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult, they must, therefore, by baptism,

as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church, and be distinguished from the children of infidels; as was done in the old covenant, or testament, by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant."

So, also, in the form for the administration of baptism, the church says:—

"Although our young children do not understand these things, we may not, therefore, exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ; as God speaketh unto Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and, therefore, unto us and our children (Gen. xvii. 7), saying: 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.' This, also, the apostle Peter testifieth with these words (Acts ii. 39): 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.' Therefore, God formerly commanded them to be circumcised, which was a seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness of faith; and, therefore, Christ also embraced them, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them (Mark x. 6). Since, then, baptism is come in the place of circumcision; therefore, infants are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of his covenant."

Here are the principal arguments for infant baptism distinctly stated, and we shall consider them, following the order of the Catechism.

The infants of believers should be baptized: 1. Be-

cause they are included by the covenant which God through Christ makes with his people. 2. Because they are of right members of the church on earth. 3. Because the promises of the gospel extend to them. 4. Because it is proper that they should be openly distinguished, as the children of the covenanted church, from the children of unbelievers. 5. Because baptism, having come in the place of circumcision, is the authorized method of marking such distinction.

1. The infants of believers should be baptized, because they are covered by the covenant which God through Christ makes with his people.

The strongest, purest, and most lasting affection which God has planted in the human heart is that of the parent for the child. Passion and expected reciprocities of benefits mingle with the love of husband and wife; marriage is a contract between the espousing parties. Community of interest and habits of close association bind together brothers and sisters of the same family, the bond being often greatly weakened when they go forth into their separate walks of life. Children are trained to love their parents by a consciousness of dependence and gratitude for kindness received from them. But parental love is conceived and born with the child. The father, the mother, love their offspring as part, nay, as a dearer part, of themselves. Their regard is given, not indeed without hopes of their own happiness from their child's happiness and duty, but without bargain, or stipulation, or requisition of pledges. It is free, liberal, unselfish,—an animal instinct dignified to a high and noble affection by a rational sense of obligation, the exercise of which is itself a delight; so that the parents live for the child, preferring its health,

prosperity, and honor to their own ease or fortunes. Friendship may be turned into hate; the love of husband and wife may decay and cease; brothers and sisters may be estranged or quarrel; children may forget and requite with ill the parents who nurtured them up to adult years; but for a parent to forget, to call back love, or the fruits of love, from a child, is a thing deemed of all things the most unnatural, a moral insanity, showing a monstrous departure from the due course of the human heart.

The reason why God has given such great strength to this affection is seen in the difficulty and importance of the duties which devolve upon parents. But for their constant, watchful, patient, tender care, the babe would perish; or, if nursed only through the helplessness of infancy, would seldom reach mature age through the inexperience of childhood and the novel temptations which throng upon the youth. Nothing short of the strongest love could secure even the physical nurture of their offspring; much more is it necessary for the mental and moral training which they need. It is the wise, fixed arrangement of Providence that parents should stand between God and their seed, as his agents to provide for their well-being in both these respects. Our heavenly father has proceeded upon this principle in all his dealings with our race, making parental affection an argument for parental fidelity, encouraging it by promises, and alarming it by threats. How true this was of the first covenant he made with man, the melancholy consequences of our first parents' sin but too plainly declare; and it were strange indeed if children could be so deeply concerned with the fall of Adam, and yet no provision be made

for their uprising with Christ. Their representation before their birth, in their primal ancestor, establishes beyond doubt the law of such representation in subsequent stages of our human history, though, for obvious reasons, not to the same extent. No one doubts that in the affairs of this life, children suffer or are advantaged by their parents' conduct; and, in the order of civil society, the parent is ever recognized as the representative of his child until it is of age to assume its own responsibility. Thus God declares, that he is "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him"; but, also, that "his righteousness is unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant and remember his commandments to do them." Hence we find that parental anxiety has been assuaged, and parental responsibility enforced by every covenant made with man under the system of grace. The first revelation of mercy at the very gates of the lost paradise was to the parents through their seed, when God said in their hearing to the serpent-tempter: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," — a prophecy fulfilled in the triumphant passion of Christ, the son of a virgin; nor could the believers of that promise offer a sacrifice in faith without including the offspring through whom the deliverer was to come.

So in the covenant with Noah, after the deluge, God expressly declared: "Behold, I establish my covenant with thee and with thy seed." To Abraham he said: "Behold, my covenant is with thee . . . Behold, I establish my covenant with thee, and with thy seed after

thee." Nay, to show that this covenant included his seed from their early infancy, he appointed the sacrament of circumcision to be performed when the children were but eight days old. In this sense God continued to declare himself as the God of Israel, declaring the whole nation to be "his people"; and upon one remarkable occasion Moses required not only the men of Israel but their wives and their little ones to stand before the Lord "and enter into covenant with the Lord their God, and into his oath, which the Lord their God made with them that day" (Deut. xxix. 10-15). Such was the faith and practice of the ancient believers up to the time when the descent of the Holy Ghost at the Pentecost confirmed the church of Christ. Can we be made to believe that this gospel was less merciful to parental hearts than the older dispensation, and that they were refused the highly valued privilege, enjoyed by believers in all previous times, of dedicating their offspring openly to the Lord? No; for the apostle Peter, in the very hour when the spirit of God came down, proclaimed that the promise was unto them and their children, and to them that was afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God should call. So we read that the angel of the Lord commanded Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, to send to Joppa for Peter, who should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved (Acts xi. 13, 14); and Paul, in his exhortation to the jailer, said: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The same apostle also declares, when speaking of those believers who were married to heathen: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the hus-

band, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy" (1 Cor. vii. 14). Holy does not, we admit, in this passage signify personal freedom from sin, but fitness to be dedicated to God; yet, surely, the text has no meaning, if they might not be openly dedicated.

From this clearly established principle of the representation of children in the believing parent, it follows, —

2. That they (the children of believers) are of right members of the church on earth.

Such, we have seen, was the fact and the practice of the church under the Abrahamic dispensation. Every Israelite was by birth entitled to membership of the church, the sign of which was circumcision of the male infants. That the Christian church is a continuation of the Abrahamic, the apostle puts beyond all reasonable doubt when he asserts that "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 9), to whom God preached the gospel when he said: "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (8, v.); and again: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and children according to the promise" (29, v.). It is vain to say that the covenant of God with Abraham, into which the newly born Israelite was brought by circumcision, had reference only to temporal blessings; for the apostle often asserts that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, though certain temporal blessings were also secured by it to his natural posterity. If, then, infants were admitted as members of the church under the old dispensation, how can it be denied that they are not to be admitted under the new? If it were right in the one, it must be right in the other

case, because the fundamental constitution of both is the same: justification by faith. Where we ask, is there any proof in all the New Testament writings that the right of believers to church-membership is taken away? Where is there a single text to show that the Christian believer may not dedicate his child as the Jewish believer was privileged to do? On the contrary, we find four instances of entire households being baptized: that of Cornelius, that of Lydia, that of the jailer, and that of Stephanas. If it be objected to this, that we do not know whether there were any but adults capable of personal faith in these households, we answer that one could scarcely take four families at random without finding some infants among them; and, besides, the promise in the case of the jailer was to him as the head of his house: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." Not, "If thy house also believe, they shall also be saved"; but, "Believe thou, and thy house shall be saved with thee." The same thing is intimated to Cornelius by the angel: "He (Peter) shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." So Peter at the Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off (*i. e.* the Gentiles), even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." There the promise and baptism go together; and if the children were included by the promise, they had also the privilege of receiving the baptism which was the sign of the promise.

We are aware of the cavil against this view, that

the reception of baptism is a profession of faith, and, therefore, as infants are not capable of faith, they are not capable of receiving baptism. Circumcision was a sign of faith, as much as baptism is; the infant Israelite received it on the faith of his parent; so may the child of the Christian believer receive it on the faith of his parent. Besides, it savors of strong impiety to say that infants may not be members of Christ's church, when he himself took special pains to declare that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Nay, when he rebuked his disciples for keeping back the mothers who pressed forward to lay their little ones in the Saviour's arms: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." How can children be brought openly to Christ as members of his kingdom, but by Christian baptism, in the initiatory rite ordained by himself? How can we lay them in his arms, but by committing them to the embrace of his church?

3. The promises of the gospel extend to the infants of believers.

This we have already seen; but under the Old Testament the parents were required to claim the promise for their offspring according to the external rites of the law; so are believers under the New Testament to testify their belief in the promise of God respecting their children by the rite of the gospel. It is not enough for a man that he believes; he must be baptized in token of his belief; so it is not enough that the parent believes in the promise to his child; he must present his child for baptism in token of his belief; nor can he claim the blessing of the covenant except he avails himself of its seal. Thus, it is a sin on his own part, and injustice toward his unconscious child, not to ask the

blessing for it according to the manner which God has ordained.

This is the more important,

4. Because it is proper that the children of believers should be distinguished openly from the children of unbelievers.

The church is the visible representative of the kingdom of God upon earth. As the children of a citizen inherit, of course, the citizenship, so does the child of a church-member, by actual descent, become entitled to church-membership until he forfeits it by his own conduct. It is, therefore, a privilege of the believer to enroll his offspring among the openly covenanted people of God. It is a duty which he owes to the world, that he may show his high sense of the Christian name. It is his duty to his child thus to put him in the position which will remind him, when of years to understand, that he is of the covenanted seed. Volumes might be filled with the blessed consequences of such faith and such open avowal of it. And were Christians more faithful in following up the vows and obligations they assume, and in impressing upon their children the obligations under which they rest, the numbers of such blessed consequences would be greatly enlarged.

5. Because baptism is come in the place of circumcision, it is the authorized method of marking the distinction between the children of the covenanted church and those of unbelievers. That baptism has come in the place of circumcision, we have already proved. Circumcision was the initiatory rite of the old dispensation. Baptism is that of the new. Circumcision has been done away, baptism remains; therefore is it in

the place of circumcision. The objection that circumcision was confined to the males, and therefore cannot be succeeded by baptism which females are also to receive, is preposterous. All who are in Christ are to be baptized; but in Christ there is neither male nor female, and therefore all are to be baptized without distinction of sex. If our other arguments in favor of infant baptism are valid, it must be administered to all the infants of believers, as the more gracious sign of a new and better dispensation.

LECTURE XXXV.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SUPPER.

PART I.

ITS INSTITUTION AND ITS MODE.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LORD'S DAY.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SUPPER.

I.—ITS INSTITUTION AND ITS MODE.

QUEST. LXXV. *How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's supper that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?*

ANS. Thus: that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and, further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

QUEST. LXXVI. *What is it, then, to eat (of) the crucified body and drink (of) the shed blood of Christ?*

ANS. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain pardon of sin and life eternal; but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are, notwithstanding, "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone," so that we live and are governed forever by one spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

QUEST. LXXVII. *Where has Christ promised that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and blood, as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?*

ANS. In the institution of the supper it is thus expressed: "The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. xi. 23-26. The promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, when he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16.

HAVING carefully considered and expounded the doctrine and benefits of holy baptism, which is the ordinance initiatory to the church of Christ visible on

earth, we shall now treat in full of THE HOLY SUPPER, which is the confirmatory ordinance of our faith and practice as members of the Christian church; for, as it is necessary to our salvation, not only that we should believe and profess Christ's religion, but also should persevere in the duties of Christian practice even to the end of our lives, so it is necessary that not only we should be born again of the Spirit, but also that we should be nourished by the Spirit to a constant growth of our divine life until it is made perfect in glory. Hence the appointment of the holy supper, which, by its expressive emblems and frequent administration, represents and confirms to the believer the maintenance and increase of his Christianity from his communion and enjoyment of Christ, his only life, strength, and head. Before entering on our proposed discussion, let us remind ourselves of the definition which our church gives of the sacraments in the Twenty-fifth Lord's Day, sixty-sixth question and answer of the Catechism: "The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz: that he grants us freely the remission of our sins, and life eternal, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross." They are *holy*, for it is necessary that they be appointed of God; *visible*, for they are ordinances of the church visible: they are *signs* to represent invisible, because spiritual, realities; and *seals*, because they are granted to confirm the word of grace in the promises of the gospel; and they are intended to bring us to a more lively contemplation and appropriation of the salvation accomplished for us by the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Not forgetting these fundamental facts and truths, we must consider this second sacrament, commonly called the Lord's supper, under several heads: —

FIRST: *Its institution.* SECONDLY: *Its mode.* THIRDLY: *Its purpose.* FOURTHLY: *Its participants.*

This order is somewhat changed from that of the Catechism, but no more than is desirable for the sake of convenience.

FIRST: *The institution or appointment of the Lord's supper.*

Our blessed Lord, being by his human lineage and by his circumcision one of the Israelitish church, observed all its ordinances until their end was accomplished by his vicarious death on the cross. Of these ordinances, the Passover, or feast of the paschal lamb, was the principal. It represented two things: *first*, the salvation of the first-born of Israel from the angel who slew all the first-born of Egypt, and distinguished the dwellings of the chosen people by the blood of the lamb slain under divine command, which was sprinkled on their door-posts; *secondly*, the exodus of Israel out of Egypt by the miraculous deliverance and guidance of God, the covenanted Jehovah of their fathers. It was essential to the observance of this feast that a spotless firstling male of the flock should be slain (care being taken that not a bone of it was broken), and that each Israelite should partake of its flesh as their families were assembled in convenient numbers for the purpose. The time of its celebration was in the evening of the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, the lamb having been slain on the first.

Our Lord had observed the other passovers without

special comment to his disciples; but the evangelists represent him as preparing for the last, which was on the night in which he was betrayed, with peculiar care and solemnity. "With desire," said he, as he sat down with the twelve apostles, "I have desired to eat of this passover before I suffer." The reasons for this are obvious. The passover, though commemorative, was in a higher degree typical. The event it commemorated was typical of the deliverance of his people from the death of the law, and their deliverance out of the bondage of Satan. The paschal lamb typified himself, at once the sacrifice for his people, and their deliverer. He was about to fulfil by his death on the cross, and by his resurrection, all the salvation God had promised by covenant and by sign. He, therefore, avails himself of the last opportunity before he suffered, and of the expressive rite itself, to ordain for his church in all ages a sacrament which should confirm their faith by a remembrance of his death and their deliverance. Three evangelists give an account of his action in nearly the same words. Matthew says: "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup (for wine was always used at the paschal supper) and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Luke's version varies from those of Matthew and Mark by adding after the words "This is my body"—"which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me." That our Lord meant thus to institute a perpetual ordinance is established by the manifest import of the words themselves, and the practice of the

church on and after the day of Pentecost; but also put beyond doubt by the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 23-26: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink of it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

From this collation of these several passages, we note several things: 1. That our Lord changed the Passover, which was a sacrament of the Old Testament, or covenant with Abraham, into the Lord's supper, as a sacrament of the New Testament, or the covenant of God with Christ, as the head of his church. 2. That our Lord brake not the flesh of the paschal lamb, which was a sacrifice, but bread, which is an emblem of nourishment; and afterward represented his blood by wine, which is an emblem of joy, for the cup of wine which our Lord thus used was at the end of the Passover, and was called the cup of blessing, or praise, or of salvation (Ps. cxvi. 13); thus showing that there was to be no farther expiatory sacrifice or shedding of blood, but that the doctrine of the sacrament, as a commemoration of Christ's death, was thenceforward to be the nourishment and joy of Christian souls. 3. That, as the sacrament was one of faith in the accomplishment of salvation by the death of Christ, and of thanksgiving for such inestimable benefits, it was to continue until Christ,

who is not dead but risen, shall come from the right hand of the Father to receive his people unto himself. 4. That they who by true faith partake of the elements, bread and wine, thus ordained and consecrated, become united to Christ's body, and so are made partakers of all the benefits which Christ, the head of the church, receives by virtue of the covenant of God the Father for the church, which is his body.

We also learn the reasons for the several appellations given to this sacrament: The Lord's supper (1 Cor. xi. 20), because it was ordained at the paschal supper in the evening; the Lord's table (1 Cor. x. 21), because the disciples were and are gathered around a table at the head of which he was, and by his spirit still is, — not an altar, as though it were a sacrifice, but a table, because it is a feast; the communion (1 Cor. x. 16), because those who receive it are made partakers individually and in common of the body of Christ, and so are confirmed in fellowship with him and with each other in him: "For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread;" the eucharist, or thanksgiving, a name not given to it expressly by any Scripture, but with good reason adopted by the church, because it is a sacrament of praise and thanksgiving for the great benefits flowing from Christ's meritorious death to all who truly receive him into their hearts. For we must remember, again, that our sacrament was not instituted until after the last passover, and the cup of wine was that which the Israelites were accustomed to partake of at the close of their feast, and was called by them the cup of salvation, or of thanksgiving. Thus all the circumstances of its institution by our divine Lord, and all the names

by which it was known to the primitive church, show that this sacrament is not a sacrifice offered in hope of benefits to be obtained, but a thankful celebration and believing participation of benefits already purchased for us by Christ on the cross, and held for us as an open treasury of full supplies by Christ on his throne till he come again at the consummation of all things.

We are now prepared to consider,

SECONDLY: *The mode of this sacrament.*

1. The *elements*, or the material signs. These are bread and wine.

The *bread*, with which our Lord actually instituted the sacrament, being the bread of the Passover, was undoubtedly unleavened bread, which has, in ages past, led some to think that a careful conformity to our Lord's example should require us to use no other in our celebrations of it. Indeed, there was a fierce dispute between the scholastic doctors of the Roman church and the doctors of the Greek church on this point: the Greeks calling the Latins opprobriously *azymites* (*a*, priv., and ζύμη, leaven), because they consecrated unleavened bread, and the Latins retorting angrily on the Greeks for having departed from the primitive usage. The Latins were, however, by no means unanimous in this respect, for the schoolmen met with stout opponents from among their own communion; and I believe the general sentiment of the Romish doctors is against the schoolmen. It is decided by learned men that the use of unleavened bread and wafers was unknown in the church, except among the heretical Ebionites, until the eleventh century at the earliest, the bread before that time being taken from the offerings of bread and wine brought by the communicants for the use of the

poor,* when of course the bread was leavened. Some of the early fathers (as Ambrose, *De Sac.* iv. 4) expressly say that the bread they used was common bread (*panis usitatus*).† The only scripture bearing upon this point is that in 1 Cor. v. 7, 8: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." There is no reason, however, to think that the apostle there is giving directions about the eucharist, but that he only uses a striking figure to signify the purity and humility and unanimity which the church should maintain. There was a commemorative reason for the use of unleavened bread in the Passover, which commemorated the haste of the Israelites in escaping from Egypt, but it has no significance under the New Testament; and it should be rejected as a part of the painful services required under the now obsolete yoke of bondage. Bread in our sacrament is an emblem of strength and confidence, which the absence of leaven would impair. But it is essential to the sacrament that bread, not wafers, — substantial, home-like, every-day bread, — should be employed and partaken of, in order to our more complete realization

* We know from Acts ii. 44, 45, that, during the great Pentecostal blessings, the early Christians held all their means for the relief of their poorer brethren "as every man had need." It would be, therefore, natural and likely that they would bring offerings for the poor when they came to the Lord's table, which offerings might be in kind, as bread and wine, or in money. Certainly, from the earliest times, gifts to the poor were accompaniments of the sacrament; and the custom in our churches of making a collection for the poor of the Lord's house at the communion table has thus come down to us from the Pentecost, and should never be omitted. It is part of the eucharistical, or thanksgiving, service.

† See Bingham, *Ecc. Ant.* Vol. V. p. 196, *et seq.*

of our constant dependence on Christ for the support of our Christian life. Indeed, we have reason to know that the early Christians not only celebrated the Lord's supper often, but that they were wont to make an imitation of it when they sat down to their ordinary meal, especially when believers long parted, or from a distance, chanced to meet together.

Wine, in the second part of the sacrament or communion of the cup, is the element essential to its right administration. There can be no question that our Lord used wine; for not only was the cup of blessing at the close of the Passover filled with wine, but both Matthew and Mark tell us that immediately afterwards he said: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." The cup was an emblem of joy, which could not have been if it were filled with any other liquid. It was also significant of the manner in which Christ's blood was pressed out of him by his agony, as the wine is pressed from the grapes. It was also in accordance with the prophecies, especially that remarkable one in Isaiah (xxv. 6), where he employs the figure of a feast to describe the evangelical dispensation: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." Some say that the wine employed by the Saviour and drunk by the Jews at the Passover was not intoxicating wine, but a species of must; yet this is far from being ascertained, besides being contradictory to Isaiah's description of it as wine on the lees well refined, and also destructive of the idea of joy or exhilaration. The plea for substituting some

unfermented drink, such as water or milk, in the place of wine, that it encourages, perhaps suggests, intemperance, is profane, for it impeaches the propriety of our Lord's example, as if it were not sufficient in all ages. Yet to such impious lengths has a superscriptural zeal for reform been carried by some who would be wiser than their infallible Lord! No wonder that their reform has been so greatly a failure; for the pleasure of him whose blessing alone can make efforts at good efficient must be withheld from measures which fortify themselves by disobedience to the divine command, and impeachment of Christ's wisdom and exemplary virtue. Care should be taken that the wine is the genuine fruit of the grape, not the base mixtures which counterfeit; and pure wine can be obtained, if sufficient care be taken.

There can, however, be little doubt that the practice of mingling the sacramental wine with water obtained largely in the primitive church. It was based on the asserted custom of the Jews so to mingle the wine of the Passover with water, and also on the fact that when our Lord's heart was pierced by the spear of the soldier, there flowed from it blood mingled with water. The more learned doctors, both Romanist and Protestant, are now mostly agreed in thinking the practice unnecessary. The wines of Palestine are strong and heady, so as to give a reason for their being reduced, which does not exist now, when light, pure wines may be readily obtained; and as to the water which flowed from the heart (or *pericardium*) of our Lord, he himself makes no allusion to it, but speaks only of the wine when appointing the cup as the sign of the New Testament. There can, however, be little objection made to

the mingling of water with the sacramental wine, but there is no authority for it; and it is best not to go beyond what is written.

2. The *formula*, or, as our church expresses it, "words of the institution."

As the church, having no right to ordain sacramental ceremonies, is bound to receive and observe those which our Lord and his apostles have appointed, the sacrament of the Lord's supper is not validly administered except the authority and purpose of it be declared out of the word of God, by the solemn, formal recital of our Lord's own language when instituting the supper, and that of the apostle Paul where he confirms and further enjoins it. Thus our church, in her "form," or office, "for the administration of the Lord's supper," begins it by reciting the passage (1 Cor. xi. 23-30) in which the apostle Paul cites from the gospels the account of its appointment by our Lord himself; and, also, adds his apostolical declaration of our duty and meaning and responsibility rightly to observe it. Not satisfied with this, in a subsequent part of the form, and that we who faithfully commune may firmly believe that we belong to the covenant of grace, our church repeats the account from the gospels of the last supper of our Lord with his disciples.

From the necessities of our nature we may often partake of bread and wine in company with fellow-Christians, and like the early Christians we may see in our household meal parables of the body and blood of Christ; but it is obvious that the confusion of such ordinary meals with the divine sacrament of the supper would lead to licentious and impious abuse. The apostle, in the same chapter which enjoins the sacrament,

evidently rebukes abuses of this sort when he says: "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper; for in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." He then proceeds with the solemn words: "For I have received of the Lord Jesus that which also I delivered unto you," &c. Hence we infer, that, as in the administration of baptism the formula appointed by our Lord, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," should be pronounced, so the administration of this sacrament is not valid, except the words which our Lord and his apostle used in its appointment and confirmation be reverently employed to distinguish it from all other feasts.

It does not follow, however, that the words of institution may not be accompanied by instructions and exhortations fitted to the service. On the contrary, such are highly desirable for the better acquaintance of the people with their duties and privileges. Experience has shown that, notwithstanding the revealed teachings on the subject, people are prone to misunderstand and misappropriate the sacrament; and, therefore, as preaching upon other Scriptures is no dishonor to their efficiency, but a specially appointed means of edification, so such exposition may be made, and with profit, of the Scriptures ordaining the sacraments. It has also been found, that, at the time of celebrating this very solemn rite, the hearts of the people are more than usually disposed to hear and receive instruction respecting the

great facts and doctrines and duties of religion; and therefore it is most meet and desirable that such instruction should be carefully given. So important did this appear to our fathers of the Reformed churches, that they all (I am not aware of any exception in Great Britain or on the Continent) prepared, with great pains, forms, or offices, which should be used whenever the Lord's supper was administered. This they did, evidently, from a consideration that, though a faithful and intelligent pastor would not administer the sacrament without a due exposition of it, yet, that there might be found pastors too careless or less qualified to expound it fully; and so, to secure the instruction of the people and to prevent errors or abuses creeping in, the churches took the duty into their own hands, so far as to require the reading or recital of a sufficient form which had their corporate sanction. Any reader of the disputes and difficulties which occurred then respecting the doctrine and manner of the supper, will see at once how necessary such appointed forms were; and any one who knows the deceitfulness of the human heart will acknowledge that what has occurred may occur again. Some of the Reformed churches, as the Presbyterian in Great Britain and this country, have allowed their ancient forms to become obsolete; but our church, like the churches of the Continent, has retained in her service-book the form prepared and appointed by our fathers. Its excellence, though somewhat marred by defects and errors in our translation, is so high, that it may without extravagance be pronounced the best uninspired commentary on the Lord's supper, of equal length, in any language. Our church does not claim authority to dictate beyond the

warrant of Holy Scriptures; but when she solemnly recommends, through the unanimous voice of her assemblies and presbyters and people for so many years, a form of sound words in full undoubted accordance with the articles of her faith, which we profess to believe, for the better and uniform administration of the sacrament, it seems only decent and just that such form should be used, except in such very extraordinary cases where it would be impracticable or burdensome. To allow each or any administrator of the sacrament to omit parts of the form at his option would be to risk the value of the whole, as he might omit parts in order to screen his own unsoundness of doctrine or discipline from the condemnation of the church. For one man, from his own personal judgment of its fitness or unfitness, to omit or amend the words of our united church, savors little of modesty and much of impertinent presumption. If the form be faulty, from the great length or for any other reason, let it be duly altered by the united, pious wisdom of the church; but it were painful to think of leaving her well-digested, venerable words to the rashness of every self-sufficient, egotistical meddler who sets himself up for a pope in his little sphere. As it is, if the form be faithfully and solemnly read, our Christian people are, at least four times a year, reminded and made to consider the doctrines and duties taught by the sacrament in a discourse or treatise so able and pious that there lives no single man, whatever be his intellect or attainments, who can write one as good, or amend it by omission or addition. Guard that precious form, beloved Christians, from corruption or garbling. If the united church sees fit to make changes in it, there is little doubt of their being judi-

cious; but frown upon any attempt to touch its integrity by any individual.

3. The action.

It is not enough that the bread and wine be set forth to the eyes of the people, but essential to the sacrament that the very action of our Lord, when he presented the elements to his disciples, should be called to mind, and this by the action of the administrator; for as the sacrament is in every part a sign, so every part of the sign should be preserved and perpetuated, that thereby the things signified should be visibly, *i. e.* by visible forms, brought before the people for their spiritual edification. Therefore, the bread should be broken, and the wine poured forth or extended (for we do not read that our Lord did actually pour the wine into the cup when he consecrated it), the administrator at the same time declaring, in the words of Scripture, that the broken bread and the wine in the cup are separate by the communion, the one of the body, the other of the blood of Christ. For it is not the bread in the loaf, or the wine in the cup, which is the communion of Christ, but the bread and the cup, distributed and received by the communicants with their mouth. Hence the apostle says: "The cup of blessing which *we* bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which *we* break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" which shows clearly that the action of our Lord is to be repeated by the officiator. The action of the sacrament is not complete, therefore, even with the distribution of the elements, but only when the believer actually receives them within his mouth, and both eats the one and drinks the other, so that there be a real participation. The administrator does

not confer the grace of the sacraments; he but does his part in the use of the means, by extending the elements through which, according to the promise of God, Christ offers himself to our participation. The reception of the elements is the action by which the believer declares his appropriation to himself of the grace promised to those who in true faith use the sign which Christ has ordained. Hence, our Lord expressly commanded the disciples to eat the bread: "Take, eat;" and to drink the wine: "Drink ye all of it." Hence, also, the apostle says: "As often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show [proclaim, *καταγγέλλετε*] the Lord's death till he come." The notion which some, who are unwilling to profess Christ before men, are fond of entertaining that they may spiritually partake of the things signified in the sacrament, though not actually partaking of the elements, is erroneous and dangerous. That such grace may be allowed in special cases, (as where fair opportunity has not been had to obtain admission at the table, &c.,) we cannot deny, for God is very merciful to our weaknesses; but the believer is bound to take his part in the open celebration, or, as the word "show" means, the proclamation or setting forth of Christ's salvation, which he cannot do unless he actually partakes of the proffered elements.

4. The posture.

There can be no doubt that our Lord intended by this sacrament to present before the church a lively representation of his church united as a household of God around a family table, partaking of the same spiritual food, and united to each other because united to Christ, the institutor and master of the feast. When

our Lord ordained the sacrament, he was at the head of the table of the paschal supper, and administered the bread and the wine to his disciples, — they, like himself, being in the posture common to them at their meals. The idea of a family in the communion of a household feast, is wellnigh as essential to the sacrament as that of receiving by faith the body and blood of the Lord. But a table is essential to the representation of that sacred idea; and hence the apostle speaks by inspiration of "the table of the Lord"; and the Protestant church almost universally uses the term, "the Lord's Table," as synonymous with the sacrament of the supper. It is not a supper in common (or communion), except as we gather around a table, and that in the posture we ordinarily use on such occasions of common participation. Hence our church, in common with most of the Reformed churches, sets before the people a table crowned with the holy elements, and invites the true disciples of Christ to separate themselves from the world, and gather themselves together about the table that they may sit together as a family of God.

It is to be regretted that our houses of worship are not often so constructed as to allow the setting of a table sufficiently large for all the communicants to seat themselves at. Those who have had an opportunity of being present at a communion where that method was employed will confess that the solemnity and instructiveness of the rite were greatly increased. But since this, from the narrowness of our church aisles, is not often feasible, painful expedients, somewhat opposite in character, have been resorted to. The Scotch churches and some others, for instance, unwilling to

diminish the significance of the table, bring forward the communicants in successive groups suited to the size of the table, administering the elements to each group by themselves. But in so doing they lose the perhaps equally necessary idea of communing together and at the same time as one family. They may, it is true, commune together in spirit, but the outward visible form of the communion is not fully maintained. As the apostle says: "Every one taketh before other his own supper."

Some other churches, as our own, have adopted the opposite and scarcely less offensive plan of gathering as many as may be conveniently brought around the table, and allowing the rest to occupy the ordinary seats of the church, trusting that in their own minds they will consider themselves as at the table, while communing with their brethren and sisters there. Still the significance of the Lord's table is greatly impaired. Nor do we hesitate to say that the expedient is the reverse of edifying. Certainly, it should not be resorted to except by necessity. The table should be as large as possible, and no other seats occupied, but when it is filled. The aged or infirm may very well be allowed to keep their previous places, for the gospel requires no painful ordinances; but others have no such excuse, and ought not to lose any benefit of the instructive figure. If the table be not large enough for all, those who cannot find places at it should at least change to others, that they in outward act as well as in thought go to the holy table.

Let it not be said that mere form is of little account, so that the heart be right. What is the external administration of the Lord's supper but a form? and

ordained for the very reason that, in the wisdom of God, form is necessary to the exhibition of the Christian church to the world and to itself? and that the appointed sacraments, as outward visible forms, or signs or seals, are highly edifying, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, to those who profess Christ? The same argument that would do away with one part of the form would do away with the sacrament altogether; which is the case with the Friends or Quakers, who reject the outward sacraments, because, as they say, they spiritually receive the truths which those forms signify.

The Puritans, with all their other virtues and services to Christianity, did the cause of religion much harm by stripping the outward church of associations, which, from our human nature, God has mercifully and wisely employed for the edification and comfort of his people while yet in the body of flesh. As the Quaker rejects all colors but drab, though God has scattered variegated beauty on every side, so the Puritan rejected all but straight lines, though the graceful curve is seen in every leaf and wave and form of living creature. We may not, from our own fancy or taste, attempt to improve on the forms which God has appointed, or introduce superscriptural novelties; but we should retain all the illustrations of truth he has given us, especially in the sacraments. We are weak creatures, wholly dependent on God's Holy Spirit through the means of grace for our upholding; and the church is compared to a vine which has not strength of its own to stand erect; but the vine clasps the supporting elm or trellis-work by its curling tendrils, — tendrils because they are tender, — not by its trunk or stronger branches

only. So every association of the sacrament has its uses to help the tender faith and clinging affections of the lowly-minded communicant, conscious of his own weakness, but clasping the strength of Christ. We are not Puritans, but of the Reformed churches.

You see by these observations that our church rejects those customs, in observing the Lord's supper, which have greatly assisted the abominable perversions of the Popish mass, as we shall have occasion farther to show. Adopting the profane and absurd belief that the bread and the wine were actually transubstantiated (or changed in substance) to the actual body and blood of our Lord, the adherents of a heathenish compound with Christianity soon came to believe that the eucharist was also an actual repetition of our Lord's one meritorious sacrifice on the cross. Hence they were so fond as to consider the officiating minister a *priest* or sacrificer, contending that when he pronounced the words "This is my body," and "This is my blood," the bread and the wine not only underwent in his hands the transubstantiation, but also became the victim which he (the priest) had sacerdotal power to offer meritoriously to God for the remission of sins. Hence, also, the holy table came to be regarded as *the altar* on which the sacrifice of the mass was offered; and as they were taught that the divinity of Christ was actually in the bread and wine, they were required to *kneel* in adoration.

It is not denied that at an early date some Christian writers called the communion table the altar,—but *Θυσιαστήριον*, never *βωμός*; which latter word is used only once in the New Testament (Acts vii. 23); but it is certain that, until the rise of transubstantiation, they

employed the term as synonymous with the sacred table. The New Testament *nowhere* assumes even this, and, therefore, no usage can justify it.

Rejecting, as the Reformed churches do, the whole doctrine of the mass, the transubstantiation, and the sacrifice, and regarding the sacrament as a commemorative and illustrative supper or feast, we also reject the word priest, other than as applied to Christ, the High Priest, or to every Christian who offers thanks unto God; we also reject the word *altar*, believing that Christ in heaven is the only altar of his church, and we sit at the Lord's table as guests of Christ, and do not *kneel* in idolatry of what we believe to be mere emblems.

There are Protestant churches in which the terms priest and altar, with the kneeling posture at the eucharist, are retained; but they are remnants of a superstition which should be considered exploded, and guarded against accordingly. Luther, though he rejected the priesthood of the clergy, and the repetition of Christ's sacrifice, yet clung to the Popish doctrine so far as to claim for the elements a *consubstantiation*, as he termed it, with Christ's real person. So his followers retain the term altar, and kneel at it when receiving the sacrament. During the Reformation in England, under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, the court politicians, and some clergy only half-converted from Rome, were anxious to conform the Protestant church as much as they could to the old superstitions, that the prejudices of the people might not be shocked by too great a change of ritual. Hence, in spite of vigorous remonstrances from more determined reformers in the new English church, they forced upon it many things

which had better have been abandoned, and among them the terms priest and altar, and this kneeling at the eucharist. No doubt, many pious people among them kneel around the altar without any remnant of idolatrous superstition, contending that *kneeling* is a most solemn posture, fitted for so solemn an act. But as it destroys the idea of communion at the table of the Lord, kneeling, though a fit posture in other devotional acts, has no fitness at the holy communion. It is a variation from our Lord's own method, and it gives favor to gross errors.

5. The *administrator*.

As was said in treating of baptism, the proper person to administer the Lord's supper is the ordained minister, the bishop settled or acting for the time being, of the church, — that is the pastor, who, from his very name, is to feed the flock of Christ. At every feast some one sits at the head of the table; and Christ is spiritually at the head of his own. But as it is a sensible rite, it is proper that the Master should be visibly represented, which can be by none so properly as by one of those whom he has appointed to proclaim his word, and whom he has set as overseers of his house. Hence we find that no sect or denomination of Christians who acknowledge an ordained ministry allow the administration of this sacrament to any other hands than theirs. As they have succeeded the apostles in the office of preaching, so they succeed the apostles in this.

As helpers are required to distribute the elements among the people, our church commits the service not to the elders, who are joined with the minister in the oversight of the church, but to the deacons, whose

very name signifies servants, and who were appointed to serve tables. This service, it is true, was for the poor; but are we not all poor, and do we not receive the Lord's bounty at his holy table? Who so proper, then, as the servants of the Lord's poor to minister of his bread and wine to us?

6. The *times* of observance.

It appears from Scripture that the celebration of this sacrament was, at the beginning, part of every Lord's day's service, as we read (Acts xx. 7): "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Nay, it would seem that during the great joy of the Pentecost it was celebrated every day; for they, "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat [food] with gladness and singleness of heart." The probability is, that, greatly needing divine consolations in their trials, and being prevented by their persecutors from assembling regularly as they would wish, they availed themselves of every opportunity to enjoy the blessings of sacramental communion. Some of the early sects continued to celebrate it every day; and it is quite certain from ecclesiastical history that it was not omitted on the first day of the week for at least three centuries after Christ, so that Chrysostom calls the Lord's day, *dies panis*, the Day of Bread.

As the church through her superstitions relapsed into coldness, the necessity of frequent communion was less insisted on. Whereas, first, the Christian professor was censured for omitting the communion on any one Lord's day, he was then required to commune once at least in three weeks, then once a month,

then four or three times a year, then once a year. Yet, notwithstanding such latitude to the people, the church of Rome, as the Eastern church, celebrates the sacrament, however improperly, every Lord's day for such as are willing to receive it. It is remarkable also that Calvin, among other censurers of the church of Rome, and of those partly, though not entirely, out from under its influence, reprobates the infrequency of communion as a "most certain invention * of the devil," and says that "at least every week the table of the Lord should be spread for assembled Christians."

Whether or not our church is wholly right in celebrating the communion only four times a year (it was at first six times, that is, every other month †), may not be without question. The plea for such infrequency, however, is, that more frequent communions have a tendency to render the sacrament less duly regarded, and degenerates into formality. In days of persecution and martyrdom, Christians were more lively, and had a stronger appetite for the holy bread and wine; whereas now it is necessary to stir up their minds to the duty by special appeals and preparation, which could not be done so thoroughly if it were more often administered. This only acknowledges the remissness of the church, instead of justifying her present practice; and we must believe that if the church were more awake to the great benefits of the Lord's supper, we should recur to the primitive usage.

It is not my part, however, to condemn the practice which our church chooses to maintain, though I am bound in treating of the sacrament to give the facts. I

* Certissimum inventum diaboli. Instit. Lib. iv. 17, 60.

† Vectii Disputa, Vol. IV. p. 761.

may not venture to say more, but I have not dared to say less.

It may, however, be added that, though the Scriptures distinctly prescribe the manner of the celebration, they nowhere prescribe the times or the frequency of it; and, therefore, latitude is allowed to the judgment of the church and the conscience of the individual Christian. Still, as the declaration is, that "as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup we do show the Lord's death till he come," the latitude allowed cannot be great to the Christian who desires to grow in grace and the knowledge of his Lord.

Some Christians, though comparatively few, have deemed it necessary to imitate the first communion so closely as to insist upon its celebration in the evening, that it may be actually a supper; and it would appear that the breaking of bread spoken of in Acts xx. 7 was in the evening, for Paul preached "until midnight." In the days of persecution, also, it would be the safest time to engage in religious exercises. But it savors of too great rigidity to contend that the sacrament should not be administered at the time of day most convenient for the assembly of the people; and, no doubt, there was, and might be again, much licentious evil suspected of, and even occasioned by such late meetings. The apostolical injunction, "Let all things be done decently and in order," sufficiently justifies our present practice, which others may vary from, if they choose, as is their right. It should be observed, however, that the Greek term rendered supper (*δειπνον*) may be used for any meal, even the first of the day, though perhaps more frequently signifying the principal meal, which was in the afternoon.

Some churches, Protestant as well as Papist, allow the administration of the eucharist to sick and dying persons. Our church has not taken any formal order on the subject, but the general, though not universal, sentiment among us is against it, because very liable to superstitious and rash abuse. The sacrament, by its very name of communion, is a public ordinance intended for the whole church, and not for the edification of the individual believer except in union with the assembled church, nor can it be partaken of privately without diminution of its purpose. It were better, therefore, to avoid the danger; and in this opinion a conscientious Christian would coincide, even at the loss of some personal comfort.

LECTURE XXXVI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SECOND LECTURE.

TWENTY-EIGHTH AND TWENTY-NINTH LORD'S
DAYS.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

(CONTINUED.)

QUEST. LXXVIII. *Do, then, the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?*

ANS. Not at all; but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God, so the bread in the Lord's supper is not changed into the very body of Christ, though, agreeable to the nature and properties of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

QUEST. LXXIX. *Why, then, doth Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood, or, the New Testament in his blood; and Paul, the "communion of the body and blood of Christ"?*

ANS. Christ speaks thus not without great reason, namely, not only to teach us, that, as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life; but, more especially, by these visible signs and pledges, to assure us, that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood (by the operations of the Holy Ghost), as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction to God.

THIRDLY: *The purpose of the sacrament of the supper.*

The solemn and affecting circumstances of its institution by our blessed Lord, the peculiar stress laid upon its observance by the apostolical command, the great prominence it has, and has always had, in the religious services of the church, the comfort derived from partaking of it by believers of all ages, and the regard in which it is universally held as the most awful ceremony

and august spectacle Christianity offers to the contemplation of both Christians and the world, all teach us the high importance of rightly understanding its design and purport, to both of which, as comprehended by one word, our thoughts must now be directed.

From the several considerations we have already had on the subject, we learn that, while the sacrament of the supper is an ordinance by which God in salvation addresses us, it is also an ordinance in the completion of which we are to take an active part. Hence, the purpose of the sacrament is to be looked for in two directions: *first*, as to what God intends by this sacrament to do for us; and, *secondly*, as to what he, by this sacrament, requires us to do for ourselves and for him.

1. What God purposes by this sacrament to do for his people. (75th Question and Answer.)

a. To put us and keep us in remembrance of Christ's love towards us, especially as it is manifested by his death on the cross for our redemption.

When our blessed Lord, at the institution of the supper, uttered the gracious, mandatory words, "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke xxii. 19), it was in close connection with his other declarations, "This is my body which is given [broken the apostle has it] for you," and, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." So the apostle: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." It is essential to our Christian faith that we recognize the doctrines of Christ's person, as the only-begotten Son of God incarnate, as our brother-man, and, also, that we consider that the vicarious work of Christ, through the merits

of which we are saved, covered his whole life on earth; yet our redemption was not accomplished until he actually died on the cross. The shedding of his blood, the going out of his precious life there, was the act which gave value and consecration and acceptance to all that he had done and suffered before. That, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, was "the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified" (x. 29), and by virtue of which satisfying the law in room of our death, he rose from the dead (xiii. 20). Hence, "the death of Christ," "the blood of Christ," "the cross of Christ," each is used in Scripture as synonymous with the whole work of Christ on earth for our salvation; and, therefore, as our church says in her form for this sacrament, "we see that" our Lord "directs our faith and trust to his perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross, as to the only ground and foundation of our salvation." The whole action and administration of the sacrament, the exhibition of the elements, the breaking of the bread and the extension of the wine, prove the same thing. Whatever other thoughts, edifying and comforting and hortatory to a Christian life, we may have in our minds, the main thought, and that which gives validity and meaning to all, is a faithful remembrance of Christ's death on the cross; and the sacrament is perverted and abused from its purpose when the death of Christ on the cross is not made the special theme of our meditations and object of our faith. Not to use the sacrament for this its ordained end, is a crime against its authority, which cannot be too heavily censured.

Our blessed Lord, mercifully mindful of our infirmities, our temptations within and without, our liableness

to err, especially in self-righteousness and the pride of a carnal ingenuity, which substitute other grounds for our salvation, appointed this sacrament to remind us continually of his death on the cross as our only hope. However at other times we may forget his love and gracious authority in the cares or pleasures of the world and the flesh, the sacrament, which exhibits Christ's devoted love by lifting him up on his cross, as it were, before our very eyes, rebukes our ingratitude, and generously persuades us to live only for him. However at other times we may have listened to the voice of the tempter, teaching any other way of salvation, in whole or in part, than the expiation of Christ's blood, the sacrament, by its simple and direct preaching, brings us back, humbled and thankful, to the foot of the cross. However we may have suffered from the sophisms of a base expediency, the doctrines of the cross to be for a time ignored and thrust on one side to give place to some man-invented scheme for carrying on the work of the Lord in the conquest of the evil that is in the world, the sacrament, by making the gospel of Christ's death "the wisdom of God," and "the power of God" "unto salvation," rebukes our miserable policy as sin against the very essence of Christianity, and refutes it as folly in the light of God's omniscience. In a word, the sacrament, rightly administered and received, is a full though brief compend of all the religion which Christianity teaches and enjoins; the most eloquent enunciation which God has given of what we are to believe and trust in and do, as his servants and children, through Christ; and the most clear, palpable refutation of all error in doctrine and practice, which the subtlety of the devil and the pride of human reason have en-

deavored to foist upon the gospel of God, and the church of his anointed.

To this end, the peculiar action, or, if I may be allowed the expression, the scenic arrangement of the sacrament, were devised by the holy, merciful wisdom of God. The divine Creator, in none of his dealings with the church, overlooks the fact of man's double nature, corporeal as well as spiritual. The very incarnation of our Lord has a reference to this; and our adoption into the family of God, as human sinners saved by grace, is not complete until we shall at the last day be received, body and soul, into the kingdom on high, where JESUS, the incarnate Son of God, has for us entered, as the assurance that his people shall all be received there and be made like to him, — not only their minds and hearts like him in holy wisdom and love, but their bodies also transfigured into a likeness of his most glorious body. There we shall see him, hear him, sing to him, serve him, not only as we now perceive him by spiritual apprehension, but really with the senses and faculties of our bodies; yes, as really as the disciples, enjoying his presence on earth, heard his articulate voice, saw and looked upon his mortal person, and handled his palpable form; though with incomparably greater recognition of his gracious, adorable beauty and majesty and love, as he sits upon the throne of his Father, equal with God, beaming forth a brother's sympathy with our joy in him, even as when, in our sorrows, he revealed his sympathy with our needs.

The weakness of our minds, and the disorder of our bodies, in consequence of sin, expose us to much temptation from our lower nature, so that Paul complained of his incorporated state as a bondage and captivity,

crying out in his distress: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But, on the other hand, our corporeal faculties are of great use to us here in exciting, assisting, and obeying the Christian purposes of our souls. God, therefore, even while stripping from the simple truth the various visible, or, as the apostle calls them, "carnal ordinances" of the Levitical ritual, did not overlook the relation of the soul to the bodily senses, but ordained the visible sacraments, in each of which the spiritual thought is represented by a lively figure: in baptism, the cleansing of Christ's blood by the application of water; in the Lord's supper, the death of Christ in broken bread and poured-out wine; and his doctrine, the spiritual food of the Christian, by the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine.

As was said before (twenty-fifth Lord's Day), these palpable ordinances are very simple and few, to prevent our being led into formality and superstition; but, at the same time, they are most eloquently expressed. Thus, the celebration of the Lord's supper in a right manner and in a right spirit, that is, when we "discern the Lord's body" as represented by the elements, has always been found to be a great strengthener of our faith and incitement of our zeal. It brings us into the very presence of Christ, around his table, and among his brethren, to receive the grace he has promised to bestow. We behold him crucified before our eyes, and know that we derive our life and the joy of life from the offering of his body and the shedding of his blood. We feel that we are one with him and one with each member of "his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"; and, looking forward to

the blessed day when he, who was crucified and rose from the dead, shall come again to receive his people where he is in glory, we anticipate the blessed, consummate joy of sitting down with the church of all ages at the marriage supper of the Lamb in the upper sanctuary, amidst the holy perfections of the eternal Sabbath. Any attempt to add anything to the simplicity of the rite as Christ ordained it, is not only to impair its validity, and dishonor the wisdom of its institutor, but also to degrade and pervert it. If we are not edified by the rite as our Lord ordained it, no invention of man can improve it for us.

b. Again; it was the wise purpose of Christ to establish on earth a visible church which should be the outward form of his spiritual church. As he exhibited his power, his wisdom, his holy virtue, and compassionate grace before the world in his mortal life, so it is his will that his people should openly follow his blessed example, declaring his truth as their trust, and vindicating the divine energy of his saving grace by their Christ-like lives. For this end it was necessary that those who profess his religion should be visibly separated from the world, and, by appropriate, significant, public services, declare the doctrines and obligations of their faith. Hence baptism, or the washing away of sin, is the entrance of the sinner to the church; and the participation of the Lord's supper, by the assembled church, is their avowal of themselves as his family, and their exhibition to the world of the gospel of the cross as the only hope of their salvation, and the only nutriment of their spiritual life. It is a frequent repetition, and with greater fulness, of the confession they made in baptism before the church and the world. Hence the use of the

Lord's supper is not for the communicant's own personal benefit only, though that is largely found in the service, but for the benefit of the church, in the assurance of his fellowship with all her members, and for the benefit of the world, in his testimony from experience of the grace of Christ and the truth of the gospel. God, therefore, by the sacrament means to give us the great advantage of Christian fellowship, the honor of being witnesses for him before the world, the dignity and reward of being fellow-workers with Christ in the accomplishment of his merciful dominion over the whole earth.

c. God purposes, by this sacrament, to remind us of his gracious willingness to maintain and support our Christian life by the power of the Holy Ghost through the truths therein signified. As the disciple says in the Catechism: "He feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ."

So in the 19th Question and Answer: "Christ speaks thus [*i. e.* calls the bread his body and the cup his blood] not without great reason, namely . . . to teach us, that, as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life."

Our blessed Lord, after his miracle of feeding the multitude with five barley loaves and two small fishes, as a parable of his power and willingness to meet the wants of all those who trust in him, was followed by many people anxious to share the benefits, not of his teaching, but of his temporal bounty; to whom he said:

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." A little afterwards he says: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." From this it is plain that he speaks of his truth, or his doctrine, as the true bread of the Christian life, which endureth forever; and, also, that the manner of partaking of that spiritual food is by going unto him and believing on him, for personal faith in Christ is the only way by which we can receive sanctifying grace unto our souls. He is, however, yet more particular, for he again adds: "I am the living [spiritual or eternal] bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews were astonished at this, and, supposing that his language was to be taken literally, asked wonderingly, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" To which he answered (as he did to Nicodemus when he asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?") by repeating the assertion more strongly: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me." The disciples

themselves secretly murmured at this, and said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear [or receive] it?" To which the Master replied: "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." From all which it is evident, that it is especially the doctrine of his passion and death for us which is the food and drink of the Christian soul, assuring him of his oneness with Christ and of the resurrection of his body at the last day to enjoy the life and immortality which are brought to light by the gospel; and, also, that this benefit is confirmed unto us by no carnal participation of mere material elements signifying Christ's body and blood, for "the flesh profiteth nothing," and "it is the Spirit that quickeneth"; but that "the words," or the truths which he speaks concerning his incarnation and death for us, when received into our souls by an intelligent, appropriating faith, become our true meat and drink of life eternal.

The parallel between these passages in the sixth chapter of John and those giving the institution of the supper, is so obvious that we believe none deny it; and, if so, our Lord's commentary on his own words in the one case serves equally well for the other. Our church, from this, rightly infers, that the sacrament signifies, by the elements and our participation of them, our spiritual nourishment, or the religious life of our souls received by faith in the spiritual doctrines, which are thereby set forth and illustrated. We, therefore, deny and reject the abominable heresy of the Papists, who insist that our Lord's words must be taken literally,

and that the bread actually becomes the body of our Lord and the wine his blood; for, says the Catechism (78th Question and Answer): "As the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God; so the bread in the Lord's supper is not changed into the very body of Christ, though, agreeably to the nature and properties of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ Jesus." Even if the abhorrent idea were true and the bread and wine were so changed, our eating and drinking of them could not, our Lord being witness, profit us anything. "The flesh profiteth nothing," he himself says in reference to his own assertion of the bread and the wine being his body and blood; "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"; which is equivalent to what he said before: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

But on this point we shall be required to dwell with greater particularity, when we come to consider what our church teaches in the 80th Question and Answer of the Catechism.

Now let us learn of God by this sacrament, that not only at the beginning of our Christian life we are brought into his kingdom by faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of our sins (which is shown in baptism), but that we continually need the grace of the Holy Ghost through the truth to maintain in our hearts the principles, and in our lives the practice, of the holy religion which we profess. As the Israelites were fed in the wilderness by manna from heaven, and drank the water from the rock, and only in the strength they

derived from that bread and water they were able to continue their pilgrimage to the promised land, so the Christian draws all his ability to follow Christ, "walking as he also walked," to heaven, from the doctrines of Christ's incarnation and death.

So, also, is this sacrament often repeated to remind us at once of our continual need and his continual willingness to supply our wants. We are to go in the strength of one Lord's supper unto another, and so "from strength unto strength," until we "appear before God in Zion," the heavenly Jerusalem. This is the meaning of the apostle when he says, "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come;" for until he comes and takes them unto himself in glory, his followers will need the nourishment of soul, which can be drawn only from faith in his body broken and his blood shed for us, the warrant and assurance of our eternal redemption.

Nor is it only while we are at the Lord's table that such blessing is extended and received. We are to keep the feast "in remembrance of him." The celebration is to prevent our forgetting him, to quicken our thoughts of him, and so to pervade our minds at all times with those blessed doctrines in whose strength we go forward. It were strange perversion of the sacrament to allow ourselves in the ungodly thought, that, because we are to remember Christ's death in the celebration, we may cease to remember it during the intervals of its occurrence. No, believers, the Christian should be conscious of a continual crucifixion of Christ, a continual feeding on his precious body and blood, a continual strength derived by faith from his gracious work and promises. We should "desire to

know nothing else save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

d. There is another doctrine which God in the Lord's supper proposes for the confirmation of our trust in him: The incorporation of the believer with the body of Christ.

This the Catechism asserts and explains in the 76th Question and Answer: where we learn that "to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ" is . . . "to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost," who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are, notwithstanding, "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone"; and that "we live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul." Again, in the 79th Question and Answer: "Christ speaks thus, [*i. e.* calls the bread his body and the cup his blood,] . . . more especially by these visible signs and pledges, to assure us that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him, and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God."

When our blessed Lord assumed our human nature, he condescended to represent in his sacred person all true believers, even his church which he redeemed by his most precious blood. As the great sacrifice of atonement, under the Levitical law, was substituted for the people, whose sins were laid on its head, so, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, he represented us in the expiation. The typical victim perished

wholly, because it could not take away sin ; but our Redeemer rose again from the dead, because his death was a complete satisfaction of the law for his people, and his mediatorial person, with its entire humanity, body and soul, entered heaven, as our forerunner, and sat down at the right hand of God. In the Lord's supper we show forth his death, and the elements symbolize to us his crucified body and shed blood. But we "show the Lord's death till he come." While, therefore, we remember a crucified Saviour, we declare our trust in a living Saviour, who rose from the grave to complete our redemption by his intercession, authority, and grace ; as the apostle says : "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The representation of his people is as true and perfect in his resurrection and glory as it was in his death and shame. The sacrament shows him to us in both aspects, that is to say, in his sacrifice for our sins, and in his glory as our head.

The feast of the Paschal Lamb commemorated the *complete* deliverance of Israel from Egypt, therefore all Israel were permitted and enjoined to partake of the flesh, which was forbidden to them in the case of the sacrifices of *imperfect* expiation. They were commanded to eat of the Paschal Lamb, because they shared in the salvation it commemorated ; they were forbidden to eat of the other victims, because their sins were yet in the flesh of them. The true passover having been sacrificed for us, no victim of blood could afterward be offered, so our Lord substituted bread as the emblem of his body ; and as we live by his doctrine, through the grace of our reigning Intercessor, so the bread, which

broken represents his expiation for us on the cross, also, as the emblem of nourishment, represents our nourishment and strength unto eternal life.

When, therefore, we partake of the sacramental emblems, we make a double profession, of union to him in his death, and union to him in his glorified life. Our church, in her communion service, declares this : "For by his death he hath taken away the cause of our eternal death and misery, namely, sin, and obtained for us the quickening Spirit, that we, by the same (which dwelleth in Christ as in the head, and in us as his members), might have true communion with him, and be made partakers of life eternal, righteousness, and glory." This intimate union with Christ is described by very strong language in the New Testament Scriptures. Every believer is a member of Christ's body, and the aggregate church is the body of Christ, he being its divine head. "Now," says the apostle, "ye are the body of Christ and members in particular" ; and again, he is "head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We become thus united to him by faith ; and every one who believes in him, that is, accepts and relies upon his mediatorial suretyship, is a member of "his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

Our eating and drinking of the sacramental emblems strikingly and naturally illustrate this participation of Christ's body and union with it. We receive (as the Catechism says) with the mouths of our bodies these holy signs. They are thus incorporated with us ; Christ (symbolically) enters into us, and makes us one with him : one with him in his sufferings ; one with him in the glory which has followed the sufferings.

We partake of his true body and blood, not in a gross or carnal sense, for it is by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, spiritually through faith; yet we are by the sacrament assured that we were actually represented by his true personal body on the cross, and are now represented by his glorified body in heaven. As he, by his vicarious expiation, took away the cause of death, which was sin, and we through him receive pardon, so he, having been accepted for us by the Father, derives from the Father life for his people, even the grace of the Holy Ghost, and we live by that life which is in him as our head. So the apostle Paul: "I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Thus each believer becoming a member of Christ, the whole church is his body, animated in all its members by the same life which is in him, the divine head, even the Holy Ghost which is the Spirit of Christ. We are, therefore, made certain that Christ's love and care of his church, and of each particular member of it, is constant, close, and personal. He loves his church as his own body; its safety and its glory is identical with his own. So the apostle: "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as our Lord the church, for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The gracious wisdom of God could go no farther in asserting the full salvation of all who, by a true faith, are united unto Christ.

It follows immediately from this, that, being united to

Christ, we are, by the same act of faith, united to his true church, which is his body, and to each of all the members of his church. We have one life, one hope, one strength, one nourishment, with them. Their interest is our interest, their growth our growth; our interest their interest, our growth their growth. So our Church, in her communion service: "We by the same spirit may also be united as members of one body in true brotherly love, as the holy apostle saith: 'For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' For as out of many grains one meal is ground and one bread baked, and out of many berries, being pressed together, one wine floweth and mixeth itself together, so shall we all, who by a true faith are engrafted into Christ, be altogether [all together] one body, through brotherly love, for Christ's sake, our beloved Saviour, who hath so exceedingly loved us; and not only show this in word, but in very deed towards one another." So again the apostle: "Holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Coloss. ii. 19); and in the parallel passage of the twin epistle: "Speaking the truth in love, [we may] grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephes. iv. 15, 16).

LECTURE XXXVII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SECOND LECTURE.

(COMPLETED.)

TWENTY-EIGHTH AND TWENTY-NINTH LORD'S
DAYS.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SECOND LECTURE. (*Completed.*)

HAVING considered what God proposes to do for his people in the Lord's supper, we now should learn

2. What he requires us to do for ourselves and for him in our use of the sacrament.

The highest glory of God in Christ is the full salvation of his people from death and from sin. All the economy of grace is arranged and maintained for that divine end. Hence, whatever we are enabled by the grace of the Holy Ghost to do for our own souls, or those of our fellow-sinners, in our use of the sacrament, is done for God, and, for the same reason, the duties required must correspond to the benefits intended. Thus, (*a*,) we have seen that the main purpose of God in the sacrament is to put us and keep us in remembrance of Christ's love towards us, especially as it is manifested by his death on the cross for our redemption. It follows, therefore, from the analogy of faith, that a cordial apprehension of the love of Christ crucified will have the strongest effect in awakening and in increasing our love to Christ; and as his love towards us moved him to die for our salvation, so our love towards him will constrain us to live for his glory. No obedience that we may attempt to render him will

be sincere or acceptable, except as it flows from our love to him, and, therefore, by the most generous of all arguments, his undeserved, devoted, self-sacrificing love for us, he would in the sacrament persuade us to follow in his steps. Such being the purpose of God, we should conform ourselves to it, by fixing our contemplations on Christ and his cross: on Christ as our Saviour, on his cross as the cardinal means of our redemption. We are to contemplate his person as the infinite, only-begotten Son of God, incarnate, that, by the sacrifice of his flesh and blood, he might be our Redeemer. We are to contemplate him as the Lamb of God bearing our sins, and put to a sorrowful, painful, shameful death, because he undertook to answer and atone for our sins. We are to contemplate him rising again from the dead by the will of the Father, whom it pleased "to bruise him and put him to grief," because the infinite merits of his expiation fully satisfied the law for us, and entitled him, by virtue of the covenant, to his stipulated reward, even the consummate salvation of all who trust in his suretyship. We are to contemplate him on the throne at the right hand of the Father, in his once crucified but now glorified person, administering the providence of nature and of grace, for the full accomplishment of all his merciful designs toward his church which is his body. We are to contemplate his coming to judge the world at the last day, to vindicate his people, and to receive them to himself in his everlasting glory, where our eternity shall be filled with the grateful memory and thankful enjoyment of his unspeakable love. All this is in the sacrament in which we "show the Lord's death till he come." Thus, as we see the great love of him against whom we have

sinned, our hearts will be moved to the source of a true repentance; and as we see the greatness of the sacrifice which alone could redeem us, we shall be humbled from a sense of our utter unworthiness, while we rely with assured confidence on his mightiness to save; and as we see the infinite power and wisdom he gives to the care of his church and of his glory on earth, we shall be stirred up and strengthened to devote all our faculties of mind and heart and life to the same glorious purpose; and as we gaze in faith and hope on the future revelations of eternity, the misery of the eternal hell from which he redeems us, the holy raptures of the eternal heaven to which he will exalt us, the motives of the world to come will lift us above the attractive temptations and malignant oppositions of the present time, until, having our conversation in heaven, our fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, our companionship with the innumerable angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, we shall be "more than conquerors" over "the world, the flesh, and the devil," "through him that loved us."

Whether, therefore, we consider our own salvation, or our calling to advance the glory of God in our salvation, it is our main and highest duty, in the use of the sacrament, to remind ourselves of Christ's love for us, especially in his death on the cross. To this should all our thoughts be directed, not only as we actually partake of the elements, but when we prepare for the sacred festival, or go from the blessed table to the active service of a Christian life; for only as our minds are full of thoughts of Christ, will our hearts be full of the love of Christ; and only as our hearts are full of his love, will our lives be to his praise.

b. God, by the sacraments, intends to mark the separation of his church from the world; therefore is it our duty, in the sacrament of the supper, openly before the world and the church to profess our faith in his gospel, and to declare ourselves his disciples, his servants, and his children, as we were set apart to be by our holy baptism. Such an open confession of his authority and profession of his service is due to God. The testimony and obedience of his people is the method by which he receives glory on earth. As, when our Lord was proclaiming his gospel, he proved his divine mission by miracles, healing the effects of sin on the bodies of men, so, now that he is in heaven, he demonstrates the grace of his Holy Spirit through the gospel, by its transforming influence on character and life. If, from our personal experience, we know that there is a vital power in Christianity to supply the motives and strength of a better virtue than we could learn or maintain from any other source, the credit should be given where it belongs; and, even though from our sinful weakness we come far short of a proper Christian example, we should give our devout approval of the principles which the gospel asserts and the practice it enjoins. The world is full of God's enemies, who deny the reality of religion, and revile its doctrines with its morals; his friends, therefore, should not conceal themselves, but come out honestly and resolutely on his side. Hence he declares such a confession of faith to be necessary on our part: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made

unto salvation." The confession is vain and hypocritical, if there be not faith in the heart; but if the faith be in the heart, there will be an open confession that God may be glorified. "For it is written, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," or "put to flight." True faith will never be deterred by fear of the world from avowing itself. So our Lord: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words [doctrines], of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels;" and again: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God; and he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." How can they who will not avow Christ before his enemies hope to be honored by him before his friends?

It is, also, the uniform method of God in Christ to employ the agency of believers, individually and collectively, for the advancement of his religion. Hence they are called, as we have seen, his "witnesses," his "fellow-workers," his "soldiers"; and the church is a disciplined "host," or an "army with banners," of which he is "the captain." It is, then, necessary that they should be known, not only to him who reads the heart, but to their fellow-Christians and to the world. There is a great work to be done, and a great fight to be maintained; therefore should they avow their mutual sympathy, be ready to unite in their efforts, and together present themselves to the eyes of men. Besides, a man who conceals his sentiments and purposes is never true to them. The secret man must disguise himself, but the honest man is frank and candid.

When we hide our religion from others, we cannot act it out, but will waver and deny it, as did Peter in the high priest's house. When we fairly take our stand, our very self-respect and consistency will go far, by the grace of God, to make us firm and zealous. Hence our Lord says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." We should be as plainly known to be Christ's disciples, as though the cross were on our shoulders and we were following the Master's living person. The early church disowned as recusants all who did not avow themselves to be Christians, though in the face of persecutions, tortures, and death. Then the confessor of Christ was second in rank to the martyr; and there is the same reason for our open confession now. He must be conscious of cowardice who is, notwithstanding his convictions, hidden among the crowd of Christ's enemies: he will prove himself faithless when he is tried.

Therefore should we regard the sacrament as an ordained means, the principal ordained opportunity, of avowing ourselves Christians, to our fellow-Christians and to the world. In taking our places among the communicants, we should take our places among Christ's friends, followers, servants, witnesses, and soldiers, ready to join his people in every good work for his glory, the advancement of his church, and the salvation of sinners. We there put our hand to the plough not to look back. We assume our stand to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

c. The work before us is arduous, our weakness is extreme, our temptations are great, and we are to grow from the littleness of "new-born babes" to the "full

stature" of adults in Christ Jesus. Hence, God in the sacrament assures us of his divine strength, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, through the doctrines of the cross. This is the significance of the bread and the wine. Christ is the life of the believer, not only in giving him life by his vicarious death, but in maintaining his Christian life by the truth. It is, as we have seen, the doctrine of the cross which is the main support of our faith and zeal. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." So our Lord compares himself, or the doctrine of his person and his passion, to the manna of the wilderness. As the Israelites drank of the water from the rock, and ate of the bread from heaven, living in the strength derived from them until they reached the promised land, so only from his doctrines can we derive by faith the vigor and growth of our piety until the end, in heaven.

We should, therefore, go to the holy table, as to a supply of spiritual food and drink, to restore our fainting powers, to cheer our trembling hearts, and to acquire courage and vigor, that we may go on toward the consummation of our rest in the fulness of Christ's glory. It should be to us, not merely the comfort of the moment, but as a healthful meal, partaken of with the keenness of hunger and thirst, to animate us for future and more determined labors. Except we propose to ourselves the subsequent labor, we have no right to the heavenly food. "The workman" only "is worthy of his meat." They who have been most dil-

igent in working for Christ, have the best relish of the sacrament, because their work has stimulated their appetite; they who most ardently aspire to increasing service, will have the best blessing on their share of the feast, because God will strengthen his willing servant.

d. The sacrament is a vivid representation of Christ's body, to which all believers are vitally and indissolubly united; therefore is it our duty, as well as our privilege, to lay hold for ourselves of the blessed truth. It is no presumption, but an obedient trust in God's grace, for the penitent sinner to believe himself actually united to Christ,—so intimately united as to be crucified with him, quickened with him, assured of glory with him. It is only from this close appropriation of Christ's suretyship, that we can be made certain of pardon, of grace, and of heaven. Such acts of faith must accompany our receiving into our mouths our portion of the elements, or we do not receive their spiritual benefits which God offers.

The blessed effects of such faith on the soul cannot sufficiently be estimated. It answers all our doubts of mercy; for whatever be our guilt, Christ has taken it all away, when, uniting us to his person on the cross, he for us and we in him satisfied the law and died under its penalty. It answers all our fears from our own weakness, because we, by the same spirit which quickened him from the dead, rise with him into a new life, given by God and maintained in us, as Christ lived, accepted, justified, and sanctified. It answers all our hesitations in drawing near to God and asking a full supply of all we need, because Christ our head sits on the throne of grace, and has received without measure

the Holy Ghost for his body, even as the abundant oil, poured on the head of the high priest, descended over his whole person, "even to the skirts of his garments." It answers all our questions for the future, because, certainly as Christ's glory followed his sufferings, they who were united with him on his cross shall be united to him on his throne. It will make us reverent and devout, for how holy should they be who are members of Christ's body! How shameful a thing to pollute his sacred person! It will make us zealous in good works, because, when on our earth, he was zealous, and they who say they "abide in him" ought themselves to walk even as he also walked. How can we represent our Head, or how feel that the life which is in him is in us, except we do as he did, and obey his will as the body obeys the spirit. It will inspire us with long-suffering charity for our fellow-sinners, whom he pities so much, and bears with so patiently, and invites so tenderly, and is ready to receive so graciously. It will unite us in closest sympathy with our fellow-Christians dear to Christ, and enjoying his sympathy as members of the body he has redeemed, banishing from our hearts all quarrel and schism and envy and jealousy, making us ardently desirous of their growth in grace, because as they prosper we prosper, and as we prosper they prosper. And it will fill our souls with fervent aspiring expectations of our final victory and consummate bliss, drawing our affections from things on earth to things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, preparing places of honor and bliss and light, and safe eternal rest; where hope, often wearied here, shall fold her wings to gaze on the rainbow about the throne; and faith put off her sword and buckler to strike

the golden harp of triumph ; and love, satisfied with love, the love of the saints, the love of the angels, the love of Christ, the love of the Holy Ghost, the love of the Father, transfigure the happy, holy, exulting, thankful church from glory to glory.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

THIRTIETH LORD'S DAY.

AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

QUEST. LXXX. *What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the Popish mass.*

ANS. The Lord's supper testifies to us that we have a full pardon of all sin by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that we by the Holy Ghost are ingrafted into Christ, who according to his human nature is now not on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of God his Father, and will there be worshipped by us: — but the mass teacheth, that the living and the dead have not the pardon of their sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is also daily offered for them by the priests; and, further, that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and, therefore, is to be worshipped in them; so that the mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

HAVING, in our expositions of the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth Lord's days, discussed at length the nature and purpose of the Lord's supper, we need not now to dwell upon what is stated in the first part of the 80th Answer, but may give our whole attention to the extraordinary absurdity and idolatrous wickedness of the doctrine taught by the Papists, respecting the conversion of the bread and wine of the eucharist into the actual body and blood of our Lord, which they term transubstantiation, and also the offering of that bread and wine as a propitiatory sacrifice in the mass.

Let not any object to our proposed discourse as unnecessary, because the Papist belief is not worthy of serious refutation before a Protestant assembly; for,

let it be remembered, that, a short time before the composition of our Catechism, the views we would condemn were held by nearly the whole of Christendom, and that they prevail over the larger part of it at the present time. The glorious Reformation, which, by making the simple Scriptures of God our only rule of faith and practice, greatly impaired the influence of opinions derived from decrees of councils and asserted through doubtful tradition, has not accomplished a complete victory; as we see in the dominance of the Papal system at this day; nor are we without painful proof that, while many are coming out from that region of the shadow of death into the purer light, there are those so weak in their religious judgment and conscience as to leave the open Bible, with its spiritual teachings, for the cunningly devised fables of a gross, carnal superstition. Therefore our church commands her ministers publicly to refute, from Scripture and the analogy of faith, these mischievous errors, which she will continue to protest against until the head of the old serpent is fatally crushed beneath the foot of our triumphant Lord.

The controversy on the points before us has been waged, as you doubtless know, for many centuries, having enlisted the logic and learning of the keenest, most disciplined minds, Papist and Protestant; so that it would be utterly impossible to handle, in a brief discourse, matter about which thousands of volumes have been written. Nor will it be necessary. Whatever difficulty they who have been sophisticated and crippled by false education and inveterate bigotry, may find when required to decide upon questions which have been tangled by Jesuitical art, we, who rely only

upon the sword of the Spirit, can easily cut the knot. God's holy word will make all plain to his "little children," who would "keep themselves from idols."

The word *mass* is not to be found in the Scriptures, original or translated; nor was it known in the church for the first four centuries. Its etymology is doubtful, but, among the many attempts to trace its derivation, the one generally received as the most probable is that given by the Romish doctors. May it not be a corruption from *edere*, to eat; *comesa*, *comapa*, an eating together? They say it is a corruption of the Latin word *missa*, and came into use from the sacrament being administered after the non-communicants were sent out of the church by the customary phrase, *Ite, missa est*, — i. e. Go, the congregation is dismissed. Strictly speaking, the *mass* signifies the prayers and ceremonies with which the Popish priests precede and accompany the eucharist. In process of time, as the corruption of the church increased, the *mass* came rather to mean the supposed transubstantiation of the elements and the offering of the body and blood of the Lord as a sacrifice for the sins of the living or dead, on whose behalf the service was performed. It would, however, be a wearisome folly for us to recite all the mummary and multifarious formalities prescribed by the highest ecclesiastical authority in the missal or mass-book. We shall take up only what is brought before us in the 80th Question and Answer.

The statement here made of the Popish doctrine has two parts: the *first* concerning the pretended offering of Christ's body and blood, under the appearance of bread and wine, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sins unto God the Father; the *second* concerning the pretended

conversion of the bread and wine of the sacrament into the real body and blood of Christ. But as the first error of the sacrifice properly follows or is dependent upon the second, of transubstantiation, we shall for that reason reverse the order.

I. That the Catechism does not represent the Popish doctrine unfairly, will be seen by reading the confession of the 17th article of the creed, which was established by the council of Trent: "I do likewise profess that in the mass is offered a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, are truly, really, and substantially in the most holy sacrament of the Lord's supper; and that the whole substance of the bread is turned into the body, and the whole substance of the wine is turned into the blood; which change the Catholic church calls transubstantiation." The council of Trent farther stated and established the doctrine of their church in the following articles: 1. If any one denies that there is contained in the most holy sacrament of the altar, truly, really, and substantially the body and the blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, consequently, the entire Christ,—if any one say, that he is contained therein only in a symbol or figure or virtue (grace), let him be accursed. 2. If any one says that there remains in the most holy sacrament of the altar the substance of the bread and wine together with the life and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if he denies that wonderful and miraculous transformation of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood, while there remains only the form (*species*, ap-

pearance) of the bread and wine, which transformation is termed by the Catholic church transubstantiation, let him be accursed. 3. If there be any one who denies that there is contained in the venerable sacrament of the altar under both sorts, and, after division has been performed, under the single parts of both sorts [bread and wine], the whole Christ, let him be accursed. 4. If any one says, that, after consecration has been performed, the body and the blood of Christ is not in the miraculous sacrament of the altar, but that it is only during the tasting and not before or afterwards, and that there is not in the consecrated host [*hostia*, properly victim], or the particles, preserved or remaining after the celebration of the Lord's supper, the true body of the Lord, let him be accursed. 5. If any one says, either that remission of sins be the principal effect of the sacrament of the altar, or that no other results spring from it, let him be accursed. 6. If any one says that the only-begotten Son of God is not to be adored by external worship in the holy sacrament of the altar, and not to be revered with particular solemnity; nor to be carried about in processions, after the praiseworthy and universal usage of the church; nor to be presented publicly to the people; and that those who adore him [that is in the host] are idolaters, let him be accursed. 7. If any one says that it is not permitted to keep the holy eucharist in the pyx, but that it must be distributed immediately after the consecration to the by-standers, or that it is not permitted to bear it reverentially to the sick, let him be accursed. 8. If any one says that the Christ offered in the eucharist is tasted only spiritually, and not sacramentally and really, let him be accursed.

9. If any one denies that all Christian believers of either sex, as soon as they are arrived at years of discretion, are bound, after the command of the holy Catholic church, to communicate, at least on Easter in each year, let him be accursed. 10. If any one denies that it is not permitted to the officiating priest to administer the sacrament to himself, let him be accursed. 11. If any one says that faith alone is a sufficient preparation for the enjoyment of the holy sacrament, let him be accursed.*

Were these not a close translation of the decrees solemnly adopted and issued by the council of Trent, you might well suspect that the statement made by our church was an exaggerated slander on the church of Rome; as it is, your Protestant reason can hardly believe that so large a body of people, professing to acknowledge the Scriptures of divine revelation, really consent to the most remarkable imposition on human credulity that has ever been attempted by designing or fanatical men. But the painstaking particularity with which the council puts forth the preposterous dogma allows no room for charity to plead that they mean otherwise than as they say.

Their doctrine is: 1. That at the moment the priest utters the consecrating words, the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the true, real, and substantial body and blood of Christ, containing his spiritual soul and adorable divinity.

2. That, notwithstanding the elements, as presented to our senses, remain to all perception the same as be-

* This translation is copied from the article *Mass* in the "Encyclopædia Americana," to which it was furnished by a Roman Catholic. It is inelegant, but correct.

fore their consecration, only their perceptible accidents remain, but none of their substance, the substance being the body and blood of Christ.

3. That the whole Christ is contained in each part of the sacrament, in that which was the bread and in that which was the wine; and this, also, in each subdivision or particle, however minute, of each of them.

4. That the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ is contained in both parts of the sacrament from the moment of the priest pronouncing the transubstantiating words (*Hoc est corpus meum*), and so long as the elements retain their *species*, or appearance of bread and wine.

5. That the fact of the transubstantiation is in no way dependent on the faith either of the officiating priest or of the participator, but is accomplished solely by the virtue of the words *Hoc est corpus meum*, pronounced by the ordained priest, as prescribed by the ritual.

This whole doctrine the Reformed churches deny and protest against:

1. Because it has no foundation in Holy Scripture.

The Papist asserts that, when our Lord, at the institution of the supper, took bread, and, having broken it, said, "This is my body broken for you," and afterwards took the cup and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," he meant that the bread was actually transubstantiated into his body, and the wine into his blood. The whole controversy, so far as we, who give no heed to mere church authority, are concerned, hinges on this point.

We deny that our Lord intended by the words in question anything more than that the bread and wine

were significant representations of his true body and blood offered on the cross.

Our Lord, adopting the usages of human speech, was accustomed to illustrate spiritual truths by figures; and to insist upon our taking such blessed words of his literally, would be to make his teachings utterly ridiculous and incomprehensible. Thus, when he told Nicodemus that he must be born again, and Nicodemus, with a Papist-like stupidity, asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" he explained it by giving the spiritual meaning of the new birth. So when he said at another time, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," it is admitted on all hands that the follower of Christ is not required actually to carry a cross on his shoulders, but to bear faithfully the reproach of Christ before the world. He said to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church;" by which the Papists understand that the church is established on the supremacy of Peter, but by no means suppose that Peter's person was transubstantiated into a rock, or that the church rests actually on him. For elsewhere he said unto Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan;" which, if the words be taken literally, would be to assert that Peter was changed into Satan, and, therefore, that their church was built on the devil, — a fact, probable enough, but one they would be far from admitting. At the well of Sychar he offered unto the woman "living water," and added, in reply to her wondering question, "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, and the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "Living water" is running water;

yet will the Papist assert that our Lord gave the woman running water, or that the Christian's heart is actually an eternal fountain of running water? The Baptist pointed him out to his disciples as the Lamb of God; but was he actually a lamb? or was that word used to declare him the sacrifice appointed for sin? He calls Christians his sheep; are they actually sheep, or only like him in his meekness, and the objects of his peculiar care? He calls himself "the door of the sheep," and "the true vine"; was he transubstantiated into a door or a vine? Each of these assertions are as positive as his saying, "This is my body;" and if this last must be taken literally, so must they all.

In the sixth chapter of John, which is especially relied on by the Papists to prove their dogma, he said, "I am the bread of life;" was he at that moment transubstantiated into bread? Again, he says of himself that he was "the bread that came down from heaven"; did he come down from heaven in the substance of bread? If then, because he said "This is my body," the bread was transubstantiated into his body, it follows that, because he declared himself to be bread, his body was transubstantiated into bread; yet the Papist anathematizes those who do not deny that any substance of bread remains in the host. So again our Lord said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood;" not the *cup*, the *wine* in the cup; and if we must take his words literally, the cup was transubstantiated into his blood, or rather into the new covenant, of which the blood of Christ was the meritorious cause. Into such absurdities does the Papistical rule of understanding our Lord's words literally betray us.

But the apostle Paul, in the tenth and eleventh chap-

ters of 1 Corinthians, in effect denies the transubstantiation of the elements; for he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Again: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Here the first element is called bread, and the second the cup, or wine, *after* what the Papist considers the moment of transubstantiation, that is, the utterance of the formula *Hoc est corpus meum*; because he speaks of the bread broken and both elements partaken of by the communicant. Now, says the council of Trent: "If any one says that there remains in the most holy sacrament of the altar (*i. e.* in the elements) the substance of the bread and wine together with the life and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and "if any one says that, after consecration has been performed, the body and the blood of Christ is not in the miraculous sacrament of the altar, but that this is only during the tasting, neither before nor afterwards, . . . let him be accursed." But the apostle Paul calls the elements bread and wine *after* the consecration and *during* the tasting, therefore the apostle is anathematized. Our Lord himself, after distributing the cup, said, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." This is contrary to the council of Trent. Will they anathematize our Lord? The Papists lay great stress upon our Lord's words in John vi. 53-57: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye

have no life in you," &c. But what does our Lord add to these declarations: "This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." Here our Lord himself contradicts the council of Trent by calling his body, of which the communicant is to eat, bread. He adds still further: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." What, then, can be clearer than that, when our Lord calls the bread and wine of the sacrament his body and blood, he means that, in receiving these elements, we receive spiritually by faith the blessings purchased by his atonement, and that through such faith we derive life?

2. The doctrine of transubstantiation is thus opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture, which declares that we are saved through faith in the truth of the gospel, and that all external acts are valueless, except so far as they are manifestations of such inward faith. Even were the abhorrent thing possible that we should eat the actual flesh of Christ, and drink his actual blood, it could not benefit or in any way reach our souls, which can be affected only by truths received and held in a spiritual faith. We are not to look for Christ in any corporeal presence on earth, but to "lift up our hearts," or "set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father."

3. The asserted transubstantiation is contrary to reason and the evidence of our senses. This the Papists admit, but assert that it is to be received as a matter of faith; for with God all things are possible; and, therefore, when our Lord declares the bread and the wine

to be his body and blood, we are bound to believe him, the testimony of our senses and the judgment of our reason to the contrary notwithstanding. To this we answer, that there are certain things which are impossible with God, because they would be inconsistent with himself. Thus, "it is impossible that God should lie," or that he should deceive, which he must be supposed to do in the case of transubstantiation; for it demands that we should believe a thing which has every accident, quality, or property of bread or wine, to be another thing, the flesh or blood of Christ, when it has no accident, quality, or property of flesh or blood. How do we know any one to be that particular thing, and not any other thing, but by its accidents or qualities or properties? Thus we know bread and wine to be bread and wine by their form, color, taste, and effects. Take these all away from them, and they cease to be bread and wine; nor can that be flesh and blood which has not the particular qualities of flesh and blood, but appears with the particular qualities of bread and wine. In other words, it is no blasphemy to deny that God can make one thing, while its distinctive properties are retained, to be another thing. The Papists' reply to this is, that the substance of the bread and wine is changed, but their properties or perceptible qualities are not changed; and that it is not bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ; not under the form (*species*) of flesh and blood, but under the form (*species*) and with the perceptible qualities of bread and wine. What do we know of substance, except as that undiscernible essence in which the qualities of a thing subsist? Hence we can know of the substance of a thing only by the discernible qualities of that

thing. If we perceive the peculiar qualities of bread and wine, we are compelled by the nature God has given us to believe that they subsist in the substance of bread and wine. If we do not perceive the peculiar qualities of flesh and blood, we cannot believe that the substance of flesh or blood is there; because the perceptible qualities are the peculiarities by which God orders that we should distinguish things from other things.

But, say they, it is a miracle and a mystery, and must be received by faith, not by corporeal sense or reason. We answer, it is not a miracle, but a contradiction. A miracle is a divine work submitted to the evidence of our senses, as when the water was turned into wine. There was then an actual change of the qualities of the water into the qualities of the wine. Had there been no such change of qualities, there would have been no miracle, because there was no submitting of the work to the senses. So it is not a mystery. A mystery is a fact, the reality of which we know, but the mode of which is above our understanding. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery, because it concerns the mode of God's infinite being. The fact of the subsistence of three divine persons in one God, we know from divine testimony; but the mode of such subsistence is infinitely above our reason. In transubstantiation, the object is perfectly within our capacity of observation, while the asserted fact is contrary to every rule of evidence by which God requires us to try such facts. Can God contradict himself, by requiring us to believe that which is contrary to what he has taught us to believe?

There are other absurdities. The flesh and blood,

or body of Christ, is a human body. A human body is, as to its essence and qualities, finite, and limited to a certain portion of space, that is, it cannot be in two separate places at the same time. Is it, then, possible that one and the same human body can be, at the same moment, in heaven and in earth? nay, in ten thousand different places on earth widely apart?—and that it is infinitely multiplicable, so that each minute particle of what was once bread and wine is its whole self, the actual, perfect body of Christ? Can they avoid the absurdity that there are as many bodies of Christ as there are particles of broken bread, or portions of distributed wine? That the divinity of Christ is everywhere present, we know from its infiniteness; that the humanity of Christ cannot be in more than one place at the same time, we know from its finiteness. The more astute Papists have attempted to meet this by asserting of his body a miraculous or “supernatural” manner of existence, by which, being without extension of parts rendered independent of space, it may be one and the same in many places at once, and whole in every part of the symbols, and not obnoxious to any corporeal contingencies.* What ridiculous self-contradiction! Independent of space, yet occupying space in many places; separate as particles, yet whole in each particle; continuing as a corporeal substance, yet subject to no corporeal contingency! A human body, without any properties of a human body! The fact of our Lord’s human body, or body in all points like our own, having been raised from the dead and translated into glory, is full of comfort to us, because it assures us of his sympathy; but that comfort is all taken away

* Gother, as cited by Fletcher.

when his body ceases to be like a human body, by being freed from corporeal contingencies.

4. The doctrine of transubstantiation is most abhorrent to our moral sensibilities.

There is scarcely anything more shocking than the eating of human flesh or the drinking of human blood. Cannibalism is the most degrading vice of the most brutal savages, and is scarcely resorted to by educated people even in the last extremity of famine. Yet the Papist, when partaking of the sacrament, is required under pain of anathema to believe that he actually breaks with his teeth and swallows the most holy body of our divine Lord, which, under the mumbling of a priest, has been made out of the bread and the wine. There is nothing in the worst rites of heathenism so horrible as this. Nay, the council of Trent teaches that the spiritual soul and proper divinity of our Lord is contained in the sacrament so that we take, with the sacrament, the spiritual soul and divinity of our Lord into our mouths and thence into our bodies.

They contend, also, that the body and blood of the Lord remain in the elements so long, and only so long, as they retain the species or form of bread and wine. Portions of the host may remain in the pyx after the communion, yet continue the body of Christ. But the wafer retaining the properties of the bread, though not its substance, is therefore liable to corruption, by which it is dissolved; so that corruption is the method by which the miracle (so called) is limited and the body of the Lord destroyed; even that sacred body of which the Holy Ghost has twice said, it shall not see corruption. The portions that are eaten, each containing the whole Christ, pass into the bodies of the partici-

pants, and then are subject to the process by which all food and drink lose their species and are changed into different substances; and this process destroys or dissolves the most sacred and glorified body of our divine Lord. These are the disgusting consequences which inevitably result from the desperate perversions of Popery. We adore that one day, which to-morrow is changed into corruption. We adore that at one moment, which in another we eat and swallow.*

Dear brethren, how sad is the superstition, in the honest exposure of which we are compelled to mingle with our most precious thoughts such painfully offensive associations!

This argument will suffice to establish our denial of transubstantiation, and we may be glad that the disagreeable, though necessary, duty is over. We now pass to treat, as proposed in our order, of

II. The oblation of the sacrament as a sacrifice for sin.

The Papist holds that the priest, having instrumentally, by using the words *Hoc est corpus meum*, transubstantiated the elements into the body and blood containing the soul and divinity of our Lord, offers that body and blood, or the whole Christ, as a sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, merit, and expiation to God on behalf of both the dead and the living. It follows, therefore, that if, as we have shown, there be no transubstantiation, there can be no offering of Christ, as pretended, in the mass. Yet we add a few other sug-

* That we have not misstated the Romish views on this subject, may be seen from the fact, that the priest about to officiate and the communicant intending to participate in the sacrament are required to fast from twelve o'clock of the night before, lest any other substance might mingle in their digestion with the host.

gestions in accordance with the teachings of our Catechism.

1. The sacrament cannot, in any proper sense, be a sacrifice, because, according to our Lord's institution of it, it is an ordinance commemorative of his death for our sins, on the cross. "This do," said he, "in remembrance of me." "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," says the apostle, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come." But the mass pretends to be a repetition, not a memorial. Our Lord said not a word of its being a sacrifice to God, but treats it altogether as a service of faith, profitable to our own souls, because it carries back our thoughts to his atonement, made and finished on the cross. So throughout the apostolical writings there is not a word of trust in anything else but the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; whereas the Papist would have us put our reliance on another sacrifice of Christ, as they pretend, in the oblation by the priest. What Christian can allow such a denial of the sufficiency of the great atonement?

2. If Christ enter the sacrament to be offered, it is necessary that he should come from heaven to earth; which is contrary to his own and the apostolical declarations. For our Lord told his disciples that his going away was expedient for them, because, if he went not away, the Comforter would not come; but that he would come again to receive them unto himself in the places he had prepared for them; whence it is clear that his coming is to be at the time he would so take them with him into heaven. He cannot, therefore, come to us personally in the sacrament, and will not until he comes to his final triumph; which the apostle means when he says we "show the Lord's death till he

come." During the interval between his going away in his ascension, and his return in his great glory, we receive his blessing from the grace of "the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost." So, also, the writer to the Hebrews makes our "sure and steadfast" hope to enter "within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedek."

3. The asserted repetition of the sacrifice in the mass is a denial of perfectness or sufficiency in our Lord's sacrifice of himself on the cross, which is a direct contradiction of apostolical testimony. For in the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer deduces his strongest argument to prove the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the Levitical from the fact, that, while they needed often to repeat their sacrifices, our Lord offered but one, which was himself. These are his words on this point: "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, [or, we may add, as the Romish priests,] to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once when he offered up himself." Again: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered from the foundation of the world; but now, once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and, as it is appointed unto all men

once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them, that look for him, will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Again: "By the which will [the will of God in Christ] we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." It was in anticipation of this one perfect and perfecting atoning offering of Christ on the cross that Daniel prophesied: "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; . . . and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." And this also is the meaning of our Lord on the cross, when he said, "It is finished."

4. The Papists, however, contend that the oblation of Christ's body and blood, the whole Christ, in the sacrament, is most pleasing to God. This again is contrary to Scripture, which, in a thousand places, declares that it is faith in Christ's cross which is well pleasing to God; for, says the Psalmist in his most penitential psalm: "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

They, also, attempt to justify their dogma by asserting that, as our Lord was High Priest after the order

of Melchisedek, and Melchisedek "brought forth bread and wine" when he blessed Abram, so Christ must offer a similar bloodless sacrifice of bread and wine, which he did not offer on the cross, and can be said to offer only in the bread and wine of the sacrament. The citation itself defeats them; for, setting aside the obvious probability that the bread and wine brought forth by Melchisedek were nothing more than refreshments offered by him to Abram, there is either blood in the sacrifice of the mass, or there is not. If there be blood, it is not a sacrifice of bread and wine; if there be not blood, it is not an expiatory sacrifice, because "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." But if the doctrine of transubstantiation be true, there is both the body and blood of Christ in the mass, and it is, therefore, wholly changed from the bread and wine of Melchisedek's example; and they incur the anathema of their chiefest council when they assert it to be a bloodless sacrifice or a sacrifice of bread and wine. They try to evade this by saying that it is in appearance bread and wine. What avail is the mere appearance, when the substance is flesh and blood?

No, my brethren, we do indeed present an acceptable offering to God, sufficient to cover all our sins, when in our faith we plead the perfect sacrifice of Christ, once offered for us on his cross; and Jesus is our Melchisedek when he sets before us the holy bread and wine as emblems of his atoning passion.

No reference has been made in our foregoing discussion to the opinions of the church, ancient or modern, because, as protestants, we reject every other rule of faith beside the Scriptures; but it is fair to add that,

antecedently to the council of Trent, very many Papists, and not the least learned among them, denied the transubstantiation of the mass. Dun Scotus, the great opponent of Aquinas, hesitated not to oppose it with all the vigor of his eminent abilities, in which he was sustained by others less able only than he. Some, who held the doctrine, denied that it was taught in Scripture, contending that it should be received as a dogma of their infallible church.

We learn from the whole subject the danger of departing from the simple word of God, and the simple doctrine of the cross. There is no pitch of absurdity and heresy, even idolatry, that we may not reach if we give ourselves up to the guidance of men, even of a church.

Very thankful should we be that God by his unmerited goodness has not permitted us to be educated in such superstition.

And earnestly should we pray that those, who are now in that region of the shadow of death, the so-called church of Rome, may, by the same grace, be brought to the true light.

LECTURE XXXIX.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

THIRTY-FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

QUEST. LXXXIII. *What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?*

ANS. The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline, or excommunication out of the Christian church; by these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

QUEST. LXXXIV. *How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the gospel?*

ANS. Thus: when, according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, that whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and, on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted;—according to which testimony of the gospel, God will judge them both in this and the life to come.

QUEST. LXXXV. *How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?*

ANS. Thus: when, according to the command of Christ, those who, under the name of Christians, maintain doctrines or practices inconsistent therewith, and will not, after having been brotherly admonished, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church, or to those who are thereunto appointed by the church, and if they despise their admonition, are by them forbid the use of the sacraments, whereby they are excluded from the Christian church and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendments, are again received as members of Christ and his church.

A SUSPICION has arisen, it is likely, in the minds of some of you who have pursued with us the study of our Catechism, that there are at least a few things treated of with too great particularity, since they are now fairly understood, and the true doctrine concerning them believed by the great body of evangelical

Christians. It should, however, be remembered that the Catechism was written but a short time after our Reformed churches had come out from the idolatrous church (so called) of Rome, and that many of the anti-scriptural dogmas and pretensions of Popery and its ministers retained not a little power over the common mind, accustomed to an entire and unquestioning subjection for many centuries; and this especially, as they were proclaimed and insisted on by the advocates of Rome with all the art and ardor and strength of men skilled in argument and fond of rule, who felt that they were in great danger of losing their authority and its emoluments forever. Doctrines and practices, upon which a well-taught child in a pious family or Sunday-school can now pronounce correctly, were then subjects of angry and protracted dispute between learned and eminent men in halls of universities, and in councils summoned by princely and imperial command; and how partially truth prevailed over error, is shown by the fact that the greater part of Europe fell back from the alarm of controversy to a more servile awe of the monstrous superstition than before. At this hour the adherents to these destructive errors considerably outnumber all others who profess themselves Christians; and as some think sacred prophecy warns us of a desperate attempt again to subjugate the world by the iron yoke of their intolerant supremacy, it is, therefore, not wise for us so to overlook the falsity of such pretensions as to remain ignorant of the scriptural arguments by which they may be refuted, and our Protestant faith intelligently confirmed. These remarks are particularly applicable to the subject of our lesson for to-day.

A key being the instrument by which a door is opened or shut, he who has the key has the power of admitting or excluding. Hence, it is very naturally used as a figure to signify the prerogative of conferring or withholding privileges, as in a state or society. Of this we have a notable, though not solitary, example in Scripture, where our Lord says to the apostle Peter, after his memorable confession, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). It is upon this text, as you know, that the Papists ground their claim for the supreme and infallible dominion of the Pope, as the alleged successor of St. Peter in things spiritual, and, in truth, things temporal so far as they can be made contingent upon the interest of the church over which he presides. Peter, say they, was the rock on which Christ founded the true church. Peter was bishop of Rome; therefore each successive bishop of Rome derives the same fundamental relation to the church, and no one who does not so rest his faith on the authority of Christ so delegated to the Pope is a member of the true church. In like manner they argue, that, as our Lord gave to Peter the authority to admit into his kingdom, which is his church, and to exclude or expel from it, promising to ratify in heaven what the apostle did on earth, binding what he bound, and loosening what he loosed (that is, condemning for sin or absolving from sin), so the bishop of Rome, or Pope, being the successor of Peter, is the viceregent

of Christ on earth, whose sentences of absolution or condemnation, finally pronounced, have infallible authority in heaven. Now, if we allow their view of the text cited, their inference must be allowed, and we cannot, without fatal disloyalty to Christ, refuse entire subjection to the Pope.

But let us sift this interpretation and argument of theirs. In the first place, it is far from certain, nay, very improbable, that the apostle Peter was ever bishop of Rome. It is even doubted by many learned investigators that he ever was at Rome at all. The traces of his special presidency over the particular church of Rome, if there be any, are exceedingly obscure; whereas, if such stupendous interests depend on the alleged fact, it is fair to believe that God would have put it beyond doubt. Certainly, there is no allusion to anything of the kind in the Scriptures; on the contrary, the care of the church of Rome was presidentially assigned rather to the apostle Paul, as appears from his epistle to that church and his residence there after his appeal to Cæsar. Paul, also, declares that the gospel of circumcision was unto Peter, which implies that his mission was especially to the Jews, while the apostleship of the uncircumcision was committed to himself, that he should go unto the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 7-10), for which reason Paul, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, says: "I speak unto you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office;" from which it would appear that any pretension of Peter to special authority over the Gentile church of Rome was an intrusion within the sphere appointed to the apostle Paul.

But we go farther, and assert, on a collation of

scriptural passages, that, so far from any primacy in the apostleship having been assigned to Peter, whatever prerogatives were given him were given to all the apostles in common. Thus, was Peter a rock on which Christ built his church? So were all, for Paul says (Ephes. ii. 20), that the church was built on "the foundation of the prophets and apostles," "Jesus Christ himself" alone having a far excelling distinction as "the chief corner-stone"; and the apostle John, in the Revelation, describing the church as a city, says that the wall of it "had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles were written" (xxi. 14). Besides, the office of the apostles as the foundation, with the prophets, lay in their inspired testimony of the truth concerning Christ, and therefore ceased when their testimony ceased, so that in this respect the apostles had not, and could not have had, any successor at Rome, or anywhere. If Peter was sent of Christ with power of the keys, that is, to retain or remit sins, so were they all, for our Lord after his resurrection said to them: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 21-23). Thomas, it may be observed, was not then present; but as he was afterwards with the other ten when they received the final and general commission of apostleship, we need not doubt of his having had the same authority as the rest. Nay, Paul was himself the first protestant against the primacy of Peter, when, asserting his prerogative to rule the Corinthian church, he says: "I

suppose [or, I reason] I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5); and on one critical occasion he "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. ii. 11). So shall we withstand any pretended successor of Peter, if he teach any other gospel than that which Paul, our apostle, taught. Peter had this precedency, and no more, that his preaching at the Pentecost was instrumental in adding the first converts from Judaism, and afterwards completing the organization of the Christian church by the addition of the Gentile elements, necessary to "the one new man" in Christ (Gal. ii. 11-16), when he baptized Cornelius (Acts x. xi. 18).

But, as we have hinted before, the apostles had no successors in the full degree of apostleship, nor can the words of the text under consideration be applied in anything like their full sense to any one after them in the church. Our Lord sent his apostles forth as he had been sent by his Father, which was with power on earth to forgive sins, and with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, including power to confer the grace of the Holy Ghost upon others. This commission to them was indicated and attested, as his commission from the Father, by the power of working miracles. Where this seal and evidence is wanting, it is clear that the full commission has not been transmitted by any succession. But as no pope or bishop or priest has this miraculous energy, none of them are fully successors of the apostles. It follows that our Lord's address to Peter, or his subsequent commission to them all, embraced some powers not transmissible, for the exercise of which they were peculiarly fitted. Now, as they were appointed to lay the foundation of the church on

the chief corner-stone, Christ Jesus, and they were governed from within by a peculiar degree of the Holy Ghost, they may very well be supposed to judge infallibly, when necessary, of what was in men, so as to make no error in admitting them to the church or excluding them from it, and in pronouncing, as our Lord did infallibly, the remission or retention of sins. Therefore it was literally true that whatever they, when exercising their apostolical authority, bound on earth, or loosed on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. Christ on his throne would certainly ratify what his Spirit in the apostles did on earth. But the same confirmation cannot be presumed of any uninspired men, claiming to be their successors. Any such claim for them is a blasphemous assumption of Christ's discernment and authority. Hence the assumptions of the Pope to open and shut heaven, and to forgive or retain the guilt of sin, is worse than vanity and arrogance.

But a very urgent question here arises, which our church, professing to declare by the Catechism the full doctrine of Christ, is not at liberty to shun. Was Christian government and, especially, discipline, so restrained in the hands of the apostles, that, after their divinely directed office ceased on earth, it ceased to exist; or, if it continued, to whom was it committed? Volumes of dispute have been written in all ages of the church on these points, and with every variety of opinion; but all the inquiries properly refer for consideration in the premises to that striking passage in Matthew, (xviii. 15-20,) where our Lord, speaking of quarrels between brethren, and having enjoined first private and gentle methods of attempting reconciliation, adds: "Tell it unto the church, and if he (the other party in the case)

neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven [the identical words, with the exception that the singular pronoun is changed to the plural, showing that the promise to Peter was not exclusive]. Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." These two verses (19, 20) are evidently parts of the paragraph relating to discipline, and are to be considered in its exposition. We have here, then, three things to settle: First, To whom were these words addressed? Secondly, What is meant by the church? Thirdly, To what extent and in what manner (if any) are these promises applicable beyond the apostles?

As to the address, it will be seen on reference to the chapter that our Lord was speaking to his disciples, or his future apostles (compare Mark ix. 33; Luke ix. 46; xxii. 24-30; John xiii. 12-17), who were under the prejudice of Jewish notions concerning Messiah's kingdom. The commands and the promises, therefore, were primarily to the inspired apostles; and upon this Paul acted in a case of discipline at Corinth (1 Cor. v. 1-5), where, though evidently claiming his apostolical authority, he yet directs the church to proceed to condemnation in his absence, he confirming their decision beforehand: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed;

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together, and *my spirit*, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." But though the address was primarily to the inspired apostles, we may believe, and in this all parties are agreed, that our Lord, in giving these directions to them as the founders of his church, intended to mark out the principles of action for the church in all ages; which view is strengthened by the fact of the apostle Paul's association with himself of the church of Corinth in the case cited, as also by the address of the same apostle to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx. 28), and of the apostle Peter to the elders generally, in both of which they are expected to take faithful care of the church, the oversight (undoubtedly including discipline) of which was committed unto them by the Holy Ghost.

What then is meant by "the church"? Church is a Greek term, and therefore had not been used by the Jews in their polity; and though under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost it was afterwards given to the flock of Christ, the Christian church was not formally established until after the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Jewish economy being still in force. Under that system we know that ultimate discipline of offenders was in the hands of the assembly of elders, or Sanhedrim, as they called it. Did our Lord refer his immediate disciples to that tribunal? The supposition is not monstrous, since he himself submitted to trial by the Sanhedrim, and protested only against the flagrant illegality

* It may be questioned whether the phrase "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" refers to the whole assembly, or to the spirit of the apostle. I incline to the latter opinion.

of their proceedings. Or did he refer in advance to the future church, in language not understood by the disciples at the time, but which would be understood by that church for whose benefit in all ages his sacred words are recorded? This opinion seems not unreasonable, as our Lord shows a similar anticipation of phraseology when he exhorts his disciples, before they knew that he was to be crucified, to "take up their cross and follow him"; for although that expression probably was in proverbial use among the Jews, it had undoubtedly in our Lord's mind a force which the whole church has subsequently given it, as sympathy with his death on the cross. We, therefore, hold that the counsel given to tell matters of dispute between Christian brethren, or of offence against the morals of our holy profession, should, when more gentle methods of composition fail, be told to the church, and submitted to them for decision; — not necessarily the whole church, or the whole of a particular church, (for we know that some, and, ordinarily, the larger portion of a church, are forbidden to speak in the church, and so have no voice in the church court,) but, as the Jewish church was represented by the court of elders, and as elders to "rule over" were appointed in the apostolical churches, this function of oversight, or government, may be very well committed to their hands, by which much confusion and unnecessary scandal are avoided; and, therefore, such a system of government and discipline, by a body of elders elected by the members of each church, has been adopted, and prevails in all our Reformed churches.

These points being settled, our third question recurs: To what extent and in what manner are the promises,

primarily directed to the inspired apostles, applicable to the church, since their day, in its exercise of discipline? It is obvious that there must be some restraint of them, if not modification. For the apostles, when under plenary inspiration as the appointed and miraculously accredited ministers of Christ in the absolute government of the church, had such divine discernment and impartiality that their judgment was infallible; and, therefore, Christ certainly confirmed in heaven what they, by his authority and under his guidance, ordered on earth. But, though the grace of the Holy Ghost has been promised, and has been, as it will be, given to all Christians, and Christ has promised to be "in the midst of them," especially when met together in his name, such inspiration is not plenary, or such guidance thorough, as in the case of the apostles. On the contrary, every Christian knows that, from the weakness of his understanding and heart, and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, he is constantly prone to error, misjudgment, and uncharitableness; nay, that the Holy Ghost does not preserve him from such ignorance and sin, except so far as he purifies his heart and, using all the means of grace, acts in the spirit of Christ, according to the word of Christ, and singly for the glory of Christ. This must also be true of the church or eldership of the church when administering Christian discipline. Christ will confirm in heaven whatever they do in accordance with his word and Spirit; but it is preposterous to say that he will confirm the erroneous or illegal acts of his servants, though they profess to act in his name. There must be, if I may be allowed the technicality, appeal from the fallible court below to the infallible judge

on the throne of heaven. Yet, until that appeal be tried and pronounced upon, it becomes all good Christians to bow before the tribunal constituted by Christ on earth. So far, then, as Christian discipline is administered according to the law of Christ, by the church on earth, it will be confirmed by Christ, the only head of the church, in heaven.

We should here add, by way of cautionary inference, that such prerogative of ministerial judgment, having been committed to the church, as the kingdom of Christ which is not of this world, the jurisdiction of the church is positively restricted to matters purely spiritual, all others being left to extra-ecclesiastical authorities, or what the apostle terms "the powers that be." Our Lord, it will be remembered, refused to settle a matter of inheritance, saying, "Who made me a judge or divider over you?" And when asked to decide a political question, refused to answer farther than to say, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's"; while on another occasion, though privately protesting the right of "the children" to be "free," he wrought a miracle to procure means for the payment of tribute to the foreign oppressor who, in divine providence, held rule over his country. It is, therefore, clearly against the example of our divine head to bring questions of property or temporal politics into church courts. They have no right to adjudicate them.

So, also, Christians, in their private capacity, or otherwise than for the administration of Christian discipline, are debarred from the exercise of open censure or personal condemnation of their brethren, and are liable in attempting such annoyance to condemnation

themselves by him who has said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

But it equally follows that the prerogative of judgment in religious matters belongs to the church alone, and that neither the civil power nor any body of men (not a church) have anything to do with such matters; and if any such presume to take them into their hands, they are guilty of profanely obtruding themselves on the kingdom of Christ. No greater mischiefs have happened to church and to state than have arisen from such unchristian and wicked confusion of things spiritual with things temporal, — things ecclesiastical with things political. In this country, for the first time since history began its records, the providence of God has ordered that constitutional law should unite with the word of God in severing the religion of Christ from the civil government; and it behooves all true disciples of Christ to be very careful how, on their part, they do not transcend their sphere, lest, as will inevitably be the case, they provoke the world to interfere with the rights of the church.

We can now see how and why the section for the present Lord's Day was introduced by the authors of the Catechism, especially as they were so rudely pressed at the time by the advocates of Popery. The Pope, as the successor of St. Peter, claimed supreme and sole dominion over the church, and bore embroidered on his vestments two keys, as the badge of his power. Where, asked the Papists of the Protestants, is the right of ecclesiastical government? Who has the mystical keys which open and shut the kingdom of heaven? To this the Reformers replied, as in the

answers before us : That the right of government was in the church, constituted and governed according to the word of Christ ; and that the two keys were also in the hands of the church : the one, the preaching of the gospel, by which those who believe are made heirs of heaven, and those who refuse to believe are forever excluded from its glorious blessedness ; the other, Christian discipline, which, in excommunicating the gross sinner from the church on earth and in restoring the penitent, if administered according to the word and spirit of Christ, must be according to the will of Christ in heaven. The language and reasoning of the whole section are so very plain that we may leave them without farther comment.

1. How infinitely important it is that the gospel be preached faithfully, purely, and fully ! It is the voice of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, declaring unto sinful men the principles on which the Judge of all will determine our eternal state. Those who come within the sound of the preacher, have a right to hear the gospel as God has sent it ; because their eternal salvation or damnation depends on the manner in which they regard the revelation of mercy. If the preacher be faithful in delivering the message, as an ambassador for Christ, he is free from the blood of all men ; if he be faithless, the blood of his hearers' souls, dying impenitent, God will require at his hands. This thought, but for the assurance of God's grace, would have overwhelmed the apostle Paul ; how should it make his uninspired successors humble, reverent, and zealous ! Hear what he says : " For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish ; to the one we are the savor of death

unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things ? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God ; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

How vast is the responsibility of those who hear the gospel so proclaimed ! Upon their treatment of the word hangs their everlasting condition. Every time the gospel is preached, the gate of heaven is flung open and they are invited to enter ; every time they turn away unbelieving, the gate of heaven is shut against them. Dear friends, " take heed how you hear."

2. How important that Christian discipline be faithfully and religiously maintained ! The officers of the church are charged to vindicate the character of the Christian name before the world. They are, therefore, bound to disown those whose lives are in open contradiction to the law of God. The duty is difficult, much more so than people are apt to think. The rule of Christ requires at least two witnesses ; and as church courts have not the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, trial is often impossible even where the scandal is more than suspected. But so far as in them lies, they are bound in fidelity to Christ, to the offender, and to the world, for an unshrinking, impartial, and merciful discharge of their sacred function.

And all of us should regard such an oversight by the church authority as a blessing, cheerfully yielding ourselves to faithful admonition, and submitting ourselves to the decision of those who are set over us in the Lord, by the paternal love of God and the grace of Christ. Amen.

LECTURE XL.

OF THANKFULNESS.

NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS.

THIRTY-SECOND LORD'S DAY.

OF THANKFULNESS.

QUEST. LXXXVI. *Since, then, we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we still do good works?*

ANS. Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit after his own image, that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for his blessings, and that he may be praised by us; also, that every man may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof; and that by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ.

QUEST. LXXXVII. *Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted unto God?*

ANS. By no means; for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like shall inherit the kingdom of God.

THE purpose of religion being to cultivate our sense of obligation to God, and thereby to make us more like our divine Father in the practice of those duties he has enjoined, it follows that no scheme of religious doctrine or worship can be true which has not such effect upon the hearts and lives of all who sincerely receive it. Such evidence of its authenticity, or divine origin, is especially demanded of the Christian religion, which, on the one hand, declares our native inability to serve God aright, and, on the other, offers us the blessedness of his favor for time and eternity only through the merits of Christ in gracious answer to our faith. The original constitution under which man was placed, undoubtedly ordered that he should be rewarded for his own righteousness or punished for his own unrighteous-

ness, — righteousness and unrighteousness being synonymous with obedience and disobedience to God. This is clearly set forth by the apostle Paul (Romans ii. 6–11): “Who [*i. e.* God the Judge] will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, — of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, — to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God.” Such a system at once commends itself to our reason. It is right that a man should be treated as he deserves. We can, also, see that the legitimate effect of such a system should be to restrain men from evil and move them to do right. It must, moreover, be unchangeable, because eternal justice, the perfect consistency of God with himself, requires that his favor should be the reward of righteousness only, his wrath the punishment of unrighteousness only. The gospel, so far from abrogating this constitution, vindicates it in every particular. Nay, the sole end of Christ’s mediation was to justify God in taking to himself preëminent glory by the salvation of sinners who believe in Christ. Christ, the second Adam, takes the place of the first, on behalf of all the seed of faith, suffers for them the penalty due their disobedience, renders for them a perfect obedience, — so obtaining for them by the infinite merit of his substitution entire absolution from guilt, and a gracious title to full divine favor.

This is not the place to argue the propriety of vicarious atonement, or the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. God sufficiently demonstrates it in his holy word, and we have rehearsed his demonstration in several lectures already. But it does behoove us to answer the question, how by such an arrangement the repentance of the sinner so saved, his reformation from disobedience to obedience, is brought about? for unless such a change in the sinner, pardoned and blest, be secured, the end of religion is lost, and Christ made, as our apostle expresses it, “a minister of sin.” The opponents of the doctrine of free grace, of justification by faith alone, (they are identical, being two forms of expressing the same thing,) press upon us as they think a serious difficulty, as if we took away from before the sinner all motive to do right and abstain from wrong. We and our Reformed church here, out of the word of God, contend in reply, that, so far from taking away our motives to do right, the doctrine of grace not only preserves those which spring from the law, but, also, adds those of a far more influential and more generous character; nay, that, instead of encouraging or even tolerating a wilful practice of sin, the gospel expressly withholds from all wilful transgressors any part in the salvation by Christ. We deny, it is true, that good works have any share in procuring our justification with God, but we assert as confidently, that they certainly, because necessarily, follow the justification of the sinner through faith in Christ, or, in other words, that his good works are not offered to merit favor with God, but as evidences of gratitude for his favor already conferred in honor of Christ’s merits.

Our Catechism, in its lesson for the first Lord's Day, taught us that there are three things which we must know in order to our enjoyment of the comfort in life and death which the Christian religion alone can give : first, how great our sins and miseries are ; secondly, how we may be delivered from all our sins and miseries ; and thirdly, how we shall express our gratitude to God for such deliverance. The first and the second we have already treated of at large. We are now to treat of the third, which will embrace all our remaining expositions of the Catechism. For, as Van der Kemp and other commentators on our book have pointed out, this third part of the Catechism has five particulars. I. The necessity of good works (86th and 87th Questions and Answers). II. The principle from which they proceed, *conversion* (88, 89, 90). III. Their nature (91). IV. Their rule, *the law of God* (92-115). V. The means of performing them, *prayer* (116-129). Our subject to-day is —

THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS IN A CHRISTIAN.

This the Catechism argues, in the first place, from the effects of that renewing grace of Christ which always accompanies his pardoning grace ; and, secondly, from the testimony of Scripture that none, who continue in wicked lives, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

FIRST : *The effects of that renewing grace of Christ which always accompanies his pardoning grace.*

1. What is this renewing grace ?

"Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit in his own image."

The purpose of God in Christ is, undoubtedly, to deliver his people, or all who believe on his name, from

eternal death, which is the just punishment of their sins, and to bring them again into favor with God. But, as has been repeatedly shown, deliverance from punishment is a small part of that salvation. If it went no farther, the mercy shown would be a weakness, which we cannot without great impiety charge upon the Holy One of Israel, — a mere pity for the sinner's sufferings without regard to his character. Where, then, were the use, the authority, or holiness of his law ? To show that such is not the case, he not only insists on the repentance of every one who would enter into Christ's kingdom, but, as an article of the covenant with Christ as the Saviour of sinners, he has required that Christ should also be the judge of men at the last day, and then vindicate the justice of mercy by condemning all the impenitent, or all who wilfully lead wicked lives, thereby showing that they have no part in the kingdom of grace.

The Father has given to Christ his people as the reward of his mediatorial righteousness, but on the express condition that they might be "redeemed from all iniquity," and purified as "a peculiar people, zealous of good works"; and so agreeable to the holy Saviour is this condition, that such a change in the sinner was his main purpose in giving himself for us. "Ye are not your own," says the apostle, "for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body and spirit which are God's." Nay, this is the covenant which the Saviour himself makes with the true Israel : "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." We also know that his name was called "Jesus" (Deliverer), "for he shall save his

people from their sins." The texts to the same import are, as you know, very numerous. It was to accomplish this purpose that, after finishing the atonement, he ascended up on high and took his seat at the right hand of God as a "Prince and a Saviour," "to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." For this, also, he asks and receives of the Father, and sends down upon his people, the grace of the Holy Ghost, who by his divine power regenerates, converts, enlightens, strengthens, and sanctifies them to the service of God, gradually, but in the end, surely and completely. Thus is Christ made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The grace of pardon and the grace of sanctification always go together. The sanctification is the sealing of the pardon, and the earnest of the perfect redemption.

Nay, it is impossible in the nature of things that it should be otherwise, for not only from the penal enactments of God, but also from the connection of moral cause and effect, misery must follow wilful, unrepented sin. Christ could not, (we speak it with reverence,) so long as the holy God is the blessed God, save from misery those who choose to go on in the ways of wickedness, because they will not use the only means of happiness. In or out of Christ, there is no peace, there can be no peace, for the wicked.

Besides, the believer by the very terms of the redemption is united to Christ; he is made one with him as his representative; and the union with Christ is so vital and personal, that the Holy Spirit which is in Christ the head, lives and reigns in all his members. Therefore, as the Catechism asserts, he is renewed after Christ's own image. That image, or likeness of Christ,

is the seal of the Spirit by which he stamps the believer's soul as belonging to Christ. So, for the believer, to live, is Christ; he lives in Christ, with Christ, to Christ, for Christ. Christ is formed in him, — "Christ in you, the hope of glory." So invariably is this the case, that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ," which is the spirit of holy obedience and filial love, "he is none of his."

2. *a.* This grace of the Spirit does not operate in us as a mere force or impulse, but morally, that is, according to the laws by which moral creatures are governed. Hence, the most lively gratitude is awakened in the soul towards God for our redemption from eternal death and the restoration of the divine favor by the work of Christ. The believer, conscious of these infinite and inestimable blessings, asks, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" The salvation has been all of grace, — for Christ's sake, without any merit of ours; and, for the same reason, nothing that we can do for God can in any degree be a repayment of his kindness. God, who has given us all, needs not anything at our hands. Still, and so much the more, the believer is ardently desirous of testifying his thankfulness by more than feeling or words. What then will be most acceptable to God? What is it he most delights to see in his children? With what is he most pleased in his Son as our Surety, and for the sake of which he has given us all these blessings? It is obedience, the honor done to his holy law, the reflection of his holiness in the life of his servants. This, then, is the thank-offering we are to render him. Our whole conduct is to testify by its submission to his will and the doing of his commands how strong, stronger

than any other motive, is our sense of his loving-kindness. Thus the apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, after having demonstrated the freeness and the fulness of salvation by Christ, opens the practical application of the doctrine in these words: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [that is, our whole conduct while in the body] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." So, also, we read that true "faith worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6); that he purifieth the hearts of his people by faith (Acts xv. 9); and that faith is the victory [or the victorious principle] "which overcometh the world" (1 John v. 5). It works by love, because it excites this gratitude in the heart; as we read: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again;" it purifies the heart, because in proportion as love for Christ occupies our affections, every impure desire will be expelled from it; and it overcomes the world, because all that the world has to tempt us will be overcome by the strength of this love for Christ, who calls us out of the world to his service.

This is strengthened by the fact that the whole scheme of our redemption is for the greater glory of God, and that his glory is to be seen in the marvellous change of sinners, vile and lost, to holy, faithful children. There is the purpose of God the Father, the reward of God the Son, the work of God the Holy Ghost; and it is for this that God has made a church for himself in the world. So the apostle Peter reasons:

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." A godly life is the homage of the believer to the God of salvation. It is, therefore, impossible that any one who truly believes in Christ as his Saviour, should not be desirous and endeavor to do good works for the praise of God.

b. From this it follows that we are to judge of our faith by the effects it has on our hearts and lives. We are saved by faith, — that is, by faith and through faith we become partakers of Christ's blessings in the redemption. This faith assures us of salvation; but the Scripture teaches us in many places that we are greatly liable to be deceived in this most important matter. The promises of God cannot deceive us: it must be certain that he who believes is safe; but we may be deceived as to the reality or genuineness of our faith itself. There is a spurious faith, or a persuasion of the mind that we are safe in Christ, when we are not, but are still in our guilt. The New Testament, therefore, and many parts of the Old, insist upon our taking especial pains to certify or assure ourselves of our being Christians. So the apostle exhorts us to examine ourselves whether we be *in the faith*. That is the thing to be ascertained: for, if we be in the faith, all is well; if we be not in the faith, all is wrong. But with what test shall we prove or try ourselves? How may we know true faith from false faith? The Scripture leaves us in no doubt here. "Faith without works is dead. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Unless our belief be a living principle, moving us to good works, it is spurious; for

our Saviour tells us that "not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." So, not to multiply texts, the Psalmist, when asking divine help in his self-examination, prays: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting." If our faith does not work by love, if it does not purify our hearts, if it does not lead us to overcome the world, it is spurious; for the assurance of faith, as our Catechism teaches, consists not in the simple persuasion of the mind that we are in Christ, but in the evidences of its sanctifying power. So the believer is faithful to maintain good works that he may be assured in himself of the fruits thereof.

c. For the same reason that the believer desires to glorify God by his own godly life, he desires that other sinners may be brought to glorify him also; and the method by which he is to seek the satisfaction of his desire is very obvious: "Let your light [that is, your faith in the gospel] so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." So the apostle Peter: "Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Our blessed Lord did not only proclaim his mission to be divine, but proved it to be so by his miraculous works of heal-

ing and life-giving power. All those works were symbolical of his gracious works in the salvation of souls from death and sin. His miracles of healing the body ceased when their purpose was accomplished; but the greater miracles of renewing and sanctifying the hearts and lives of sinners will continue until the end of time to prove the gospel divine. This is his own appointed method, which Christians are to pursue when their gratitude for the love which Christ has shown their own souls moves them to win the impenitent from the ways of sin, and to animate the flagging zeal of their fellow-Christians in their Master's honor. This is a most solemn consideration for us, who profess the religion of Christ. We cannot be indifferent to the practice of others, and be innocent. Our lives should be constant testimonies before the world that the gospel teaches us to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Nay, we should give this testimony for the express purpose of winning others to glorify our God in a religious life.

Thus have we learnt that true faith is the means by which the grace of Christ brings sinners to repentance, and fits believers through a godly practice on earth for the holy blessedness of heaven; and that the method by which faith works is the inclining our hearts through a grateful love, to do the will, and seek the glory of our God and Saviour. Therefore, though we are saved by grace alone, wholly on account of Christ's merits, and though our own works have no merit in the sight of God, we must still do good works to prove our thankfulness, to advance our Saviour's praise, to assure ourselves that our faith is genuine, and to persuade our fellow-men to seek the same salvation, and glorify God by a Christian life.

SECONDLY : *The testimony of Scripture that none who continue in wicked lives shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

This, though very properly repeated for the enforcement of the truth, is but a repetition of the previous argument, and needs no demonstration other than the direct testimonies of Holy Scripture. No religious opinion can be sound which tolerates a wilful perseverance in known sin. The gospel was sent to turn men from wickedness to the service of God, and the heaven which it promises is holy and pure, receiving into its blessedness none who love sin. It is as true now as before Christ came, that "the wicked shall be cast into hell with all the nations who forget God." God will have mercy upon all who truly rely on Christ for salvation, but the main part of that salvation is deliverance from the power of sin. Therefore, none truly rely upon Christ, or trust in his mercy, who are not sincerely penitent, and who do not earnestly endeavor by his grace to follow his example.

Beloved, let us examine ourselves by these tests whether we be in Christ or not. It will be a fearful thing if, after professing ourselves Christians, we should fall at last, because of our neglects or our vices, into the bitter pains of eternal death !

LECTURE XLI.

THE NATURE OF TRUE CONVERSION.

FIRST LECTURE.

THIRTY-THIRD LORD'S DAY.

THE NATURE OF TRUE CONVERSION.

(FIRST LECTURE.)

QUEST. LXXXVIII. *Of how many parts doth the true conversion of man consist?*

ANS. Of two parts. Of the mortification of the old, and of the quickening of the new man.

QUEST. LXXXIX. *What is the mortification of the old man?*

ANS. It is a sincere sorrow of heart that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them.

QUEST. XC. *What is the quickening of the new man?*

ANS. It is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.

QUEST. XCI. *What are good works?*

ANS. Only those which proceed from a true faith, and are performed according to the law of God and to his glory; and not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men.

IN our lesson for the last Lord's day we were taught that the consequence of our deliverance from misery by the grace of Christ through faith is our doing of good works as the fruits of a lively and constraining gratitude, and, therefore, that they who by their wilful continuance in wicked lives prove their not having been converted unto God, can have from the doctrine of the gospel no true hope of salvation. It follows, properly, that we should ascertain what true conversion of a sinner to God is, or, as the Catechism has it, in what true conversion consists,—the knowledge of which will discover plainly what a Christian means by good works. These two points are handled in the lesson which we are now to study.

FIRST: *The nature of true conversion.* (88th, 89th, 90th Questions and Answers.)

SECONDLY: *The nature of good works.* (91st Question and Answer.)

FIRST: *The nature of true conversion.*

I. The purpose of God in the gospel being to deliver "his people from the power" as well as the guilt "of their sins," there must be wrought in all those who are partakers of that salvation, a radical change from a sinful to a holy life. This transformation will be complete in the fulness of the redemption, that is, when the believer is taken up to be with Christ, his Head and Fore-runner; but on earth it is gradual, though surely progressive. This process we commonly call sanctification. There must, therefore, be a beginning of this transformation or sanctification, a time when the tide of the soul's moral life is turned from its natural ebb towards eternal death and flows toward heaven. This act of change we call *conversion*.

Salvation being all of grace, the conversion of a sinner from sin to God's service must be from a sovereign, divine power, exerted in the sinner's soul, changing its principles and motives of conduct; but as the operation of grace is through the moral faculties of free agents, and not a mere force impelling us against our will and understanding, the sinner, called effectually by divine grace, turns himself by the divine strength so imparted to him. Conversion, therefore, is indeed accomplished by the grace of God, but it is also the act of the sinner himself. In the former part of the Catechism, on our Deliverance, we found conversion, or the change from the old to the new man, among the "benefits" which we "receive from the death and sacrifice of Christ on

the cross" (Question 43d), and *there* we treated of it as the act of God. This conversion of the sinner by God is also called by Scripture regeneration, or the begetting again by the power of the Holy Ghost with the seed of the word (1 Peter i. 23), because it is an imparting of a new moral life to the soul, from which holy actings will proceed. *Here* we find conversion among the evidences of our thankfulness to God for having "delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Hence, we are now to consider it as the act of the sinner under the influence of divine grace.

II. The Catechism declares this true conversion to consist in two parts. 1. The mortification of the old man. 2. The quickening of the new man.

Let us, before proceeding farther, ascertain the meaning of these terms. The contrasted expressions "old man" and "new man" are taken from Scripture. The apostle (Eph. iv. 22-24) says: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation [conduct] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" [holiness of truth]. Man, here, is put for our moral nature: "the old man," for the nature we are born with, — whence it is also called "the natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14); "the new man," for the holy nature, which we derive from the Holy Spirit in regeneration, — whence it is also called "spiritual." We inherit the first from the first Adam; we receive the second by faith from the second Adam, who is Christ. "Mortification" and "quickenings" are also scriptural words. Mortification signifies, liter-

ally, slaying or putting to death, and hence, metaphorically, deadening. "If ye through the spirit do mortify [*θανάτωτε*] the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. vii. 13). "Mortify [*νεκρώσατε*], therefore, your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 5). Quickening is, literally, reviving, or making alive [*ζωοποιέω*], and hence may have the metaphorical sense of strengthening, or increasing, life. Strictly speaking, only God can kill the old man, or revive—make to life—the new man; yet here, and in close accordance with Scripture, the believer has a personal agency in mortifying the one and quickening the other. We are taught, also, that the mortification of our old nature and the quickening of our new nature are carried on by the believer simultaneously in the continuous process of conversion, or transformation; which shows, that, though the new life is implanted, it is not immediately, or without resistance, perfectly paramount in the soul, but is opposed and hindered by our old nature, not yet utterly killed, though it has had its death-blow. Conversion, therefore, on our part, is a struggle or conflict which the believer, animated by the grace of God in the new life, maintains against the power of sin "which still remaineth, against our will, in us"; and this conflict, though the new life must be ultimately victorious, is sharp and often with various alternations or vacillations to either side. It is the new life within our carnal nature, and, therefore, opposed and impeded by the lusts and infirmities of our fallen, or old nature. This the apostle describes (Rom. vii. 19–25): "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me: I find then a law [a

principle] that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." We are now prepared to inquire,

1. What is the mortification of the old man? "It is a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them."

a. "A sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins." It is the believer who has this sorrow. Though he is now forgiven, and is enjoying the favor of God here, and the hope of eternal blessedness hereafter, he is for that very reason more sorrowful on account of his offences against God. He mourns his past sins and his present failures, not because he dreads, like a slave, the punishment he deserves and cannot escape from, but because he has done such grievous wrong against the holy God, who is so kind and merciful to his soul in Christ Jesus. He acknowledges his desert of hell, and shudders at the terrible danger he hopes to escape, but he rather sees in the agonies of the eternal death the infinite proof of God's condemnation of such sins as he has committed,—the estimate God has of its abominable evil. He trusts for mercy through the righteousness of Christ, the ground of his atonement (or reconciliation) to God; but the infinite means provided, because necessary for

his redemption in the humiliation, painful obedience, and more painful sufferings of Christ the Son of God incarnate, convinces him yet more of the guilt of all sin, while they increase immeasurably his love for the God he has offended, and, therefore, his sorrow of heart for his great sins against his heavenly Father and best friend. The holiness of God condemns him, the righteousness of God's law condemns him, as very wicked and degraded; but the love of God and his unspeakable mercy in Christ Jesus, the deep humiliation and bitter sufferings of his Saviour, the long-suffering, patience, and successful perseverance of the Holy Ghost in bringing him, notwithstanding his obstinate, rebellious resistance, into salvation, — the consideration of these, I say, show him, in yet darker colors, his extreme baseness and utter inexcusableness. He sees that it was his sin, with that of others like himself, which brought the dreadful wrath of God upon Christ, his surety; that all his healing comes from the stripes which Christ bore in his stead, and all his hope of life from the exquisite agonies of his incarnate Lord dying the death man deserved to die. Therefore, when with true faith he looks upon Christ as his Saviour, and sees in his Lord's glorified body the scars of the crucifixion, he remembers all that Jesus suffered because of his guilt, and he mourns and reproaches himself for all his sins. He sees, also, the great pains the blessed Spirit has taken for his conversion, in giving him the Holy Scripture, and all the other means of grace, with opportunities of repentance; in pursuing him by arguments and warnings and invitations and promises; in pressing the truth closely home upon his understanding and heart and conscience; in forcing, as it were, his way

into his soul, enlightening his mind, turning his affections, and graciously overpowering his will, and now bringing him to repentance and dwelling within him, to move and strengthen him unto those good works which are the grateful evidences of his faith in Christ; and, therefore, he sees the enormous wickedness of those sins of his which insulted and grieved and wounded the Holy Spirit at the very time the Holy Comforter was striving to save him; the opportunities he despitefully misimproved; the obstinate resistances he made; the wilful breaking through of restraints which he was so often guilty of; and, even now, the feeble zeal of his renewed mind in seconding and carrying out to practice the religious purposes that grace has inspired him with. There is, thus, not a doctrine or fact or incident of the salvation he believes to be his, which does not enhance his sorrow for sin. This is the sorrow which is the sign of true conversion, — the sorrow for sins which springs from an apprehension (or trustful belief) of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus by the grace of the Holy Ghost. Such sorrow as springs only from a fear of God's wrath on account of our sins, though it may mingle with more gracious motives to hate sin, is no proof of genuine repentance, because it is wholly selfish, and does not bring us back to the love of God. It is not necessarily sinful, nay, as we have said, it may aid in moving the sinner to repentance, but in itself it is no proof of our conversion, and in the absence of reliance upon Christ it is the reverse, — a sorrow that worketh death, because there is no submission of the heart to God. But the sorrow which comes from faith in Christ's love kills in the heart our enmity to God, and bows us at the feet of God, weeping yet loving children.

b. We learn that this sorrow is not a mere sentiment or emotion, a thing of sighs and tears and regrets, but that it operates as an energetic principle, making us "hate" all sin, and resolutely "to flee from it." How can they who have seen how odious sin is in God's sight, continue to offend him by wilfully committing it? How can they who have seen what their sins brought upon Christ, inflict fresh wounds on his love, and before the world "crucify, as it were, the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame"? How can they who have seen that sin is a direct insult and resistance and grievance to the Holy Spirit in his gracious work upon our hearts, throw fresh injuries and obstacles in his merciful and sanctifying way? The believer, therefore, will turn from sins with abhorrence, he will hate them, he will resist temptation to them, he will fly from them as from disgusting, guilty, perilous enemies to God and his soul. The more he learns of God in Christ, the more he enjoys the comforts of his religion, the more will he hate sin and fly from it. Day by day, as his faith strengthens, will he "mortify" "the old man," and show his gratitude to God in Christ by hating all that God hates, and avoiding all that God has forbidden.

2. The quickening of the new man.

"It is a sincere joy of heart in God through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works."

a. A sincere joy of heart in God through Christ.

If any, hearing us discourse of the sorrow and self-condemnations and painful strugglings, temptations within and without us, which accompany repentance, suppose that conversion to God is only a melancholy

and grievous temper, clouding our life in gloom, and making our religious practice an afflictive penance, they need farther teaching in the blessed experience of a believing soul. As the "old man" and the "new man" are, so long as our Christian life is in the mortal body of sin, struggling for the mastery, and the old man, our worse self, must be resolutely "mortified," we must feel the anguish and agonies of a death, an execution, or, as the Scripture more emphatically calls it, a crucifixion of our natural tendencies and desires. Therefore hate, a very strong passion, is sent to our aid, that we may set ourselves on our wickedness with the ardor of a combatant, who minds not his own sufferings in his determination to inflict death on his foe. But hate is not enough to bear us victoriously through. There is a stronger passion yet,—the power most prevalent and impelling in God or man,—love, which sheds through the faculties and affections of the human soul a delicious ardor, absorbing the whole nature to one purpose, and concentrating all its forces on one enterprise. Faith is strong, hope is stronger, but love is strongest in all the operations of the Christian life. It is the superlative of the three degrees of heavenly grace, the acme of the climax by which we ascend to God. Hence, in this most difficult work of our conversion, love alone is equal by divine grace to its accomplishment, and has the largest share in the process. God, from whom comes the divine life which assimilates us to himself, is love; and love to God is so identified with the new life, that we cannot distinguish it from the life itself. It can be engendered, quickened, nurtured, perfected only by love. It is the love of God in Christ which awakens love in our hearts. "We

love him because he first loved us." "The love of Christ constraineth us . . . to live not unto ourselves but unto him who died for us and rose again." It is the perception, the persuasion, the apprehension, the bringing home to himself of the love of God in Christ, which transforms the believer by an all-pervading energy, thrilling, subduing, exciting all his senses into a willing, happy, obedient creature of Christ's will. As in his life-giving miracle the prophet stretched himself on the body of the child, so does Christ by the Holy Spirit, in regenerating love, closely embrace the soul of his choice, warming it with his own divine warmth, breathing into it his own divine breath, until it returns the glow, the breath, the clinging embrace, and rises with him a new creature, conscious of eternal life.

The first effect of this love of God, through faith in Christ, is joy: joy, that we possess Christ as our own; joy in the great love he shows to us; joy in the delightful love we bear towards him; joy in the beauty of his holiness; joy that we may partake of that highest beauty; joy in our deliverance from the displeasure of him whose love is our greatest happiness; joy in the assured hope of a perfect, eternal consummation of such transcendent bliss; joy, that he will accept any returns of our gratitude; joy, that he enables us to make those returns by our own powers, poor in themselves, but vigorous from his imparted grace; joy, that we may give up our whole lives, all we are, all we have, now and forever, to "him whom" our "soul loveth."

Christian joy, joy springing from such a source, must be more than a lively passion or a rapturous sentiment. It inspires the soul with a divine energy, and gives a

tone of vigorous health to all its faculties. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," saith the Holy Ghost by the prophet to Israel. Therefore the Catechism, in its definition of conversion: "With love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works." The believer, rejoicing over his deliverance, is filled with gratitude to his deliverer, and ardently gives himself up to God's service. His inquiry is, What can I do to please him, my Father, my Saviour, my Sanctifier? It is now his delight to obey the divine will. His heart is turned from sin because it provokes God; he hates it and would fly from it. So when he discovers what God's law requires, he not only assents to its requirements, but rejoices in them, and delights to do what he loves for the sake of him whom he loves. Far from considering those commandments grievous, they are to him a perfect law of liberty, for he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and as he feels the new life and love and joy in God through Christ filling and animating his soul, he gladly gives all his strength to every good work which Providence lays to his hand. It is no longer a spirit of bondage, making him a reluctant servant through fear of wrath, but the cheerful, earnest obedience of a child loving his Father, God, and loving the work his Father gives him, that he may become more and more like Christ, with whom the Father is well pleased, and through whom the Father is well pleased with all who endeavor to follow in his steps.

Such is the nature of true conversion.

1. It is accompanied by strong emotions, — sorrow, and joy, and hate, and love, anguish and delight. Yet it is a fatal mistake that mere excitement of feeling,

even though it be about religious things, is a proof of conversion. Religion does not lie in heats of devotion or exaggerated passion. The heathen are so excited in their idolatries, as were the Israelites before the golden calf. We must carefully examine whence these feelings come : whether they spring from our having offended God or not ; whether from joy in God or not ; whether our hearts are converted from sin to the service of God or not.

2. We have described the converted heart under strong terms, setting it forth in the manner which, were grace perfect in us, it would manifest itself. Still we must not despair of God's mercy, or doubt his renewing grace, if we come far short of these high sensibilities and of the holy practice which the law of God requires. Conversion is a change begun, it is true, in regeneration, but not consummated until the believer enters into heaven. He hates sin and flees from it more and more ; he loves God and delights to do the will of God in good works. Yet the corruption is still within him, though against his will ; and grace is still in conflict with the corruption. Nay, the conflict rouses the corruption to a desperate resistance. Before, his eyes were blinded, his conscience inert ; he did not see or feel the vileness and misery of sin, and knew not how great a sinner he was. Now, his sense of sin is keen. He compares himself with the law of God, the claims of God's love on his heart ; and in proportion as he desires and endeavors to obey, he discovers, to his shame and grief, his evilness of heart, his shortcomings, his failures, his lapses. He mourns that he hates sin so little ; that he loves God in Christ so little ; that he sins so often ; that he does so few good works, and those so

feebly. But the very sharpness of the conflict proves the activity of grace ; and while he suffers that his spiritual life is so weak, he should thank God with joy that he is no longer dead. It is a great change which only the grace of God could work, that the current of his life has been turned from love of sin to love of holiness, from enmity against God to delight in the way of God's commandments.

3. Hence the main and only sufficient evidence of our conversion lies in our principles. If the old man reigns over us, and we yield our desires and our affections and our acts to its corrupt will, we are yet dead in our sins ; but if the new man be established in our hearts, and we yield to its godly will our desires and affections and acts, sincerely endeavoring after new obedience, we are children of grace. This is what our church says in her office for the holy communion, which is the profession and covenant of our faith in Christ : " We do not come to the supper to testify thereby that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves ; but, on the contrary, considering that we seek our life out of ourselves in Christ, we acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death. Therefore, notwithstanding we feel many infirmities and miseries in ourselves, as namely, that we have not perfect faith, and do not give ourselves to serve God with that zeal as we are bound, and have daily to strive with the weakness of our faith and the evil lusts of our flesh, yet, since we are, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, sorry for these weaknesses, and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God, therefore we rest assured that no sin or infirmity, which still remaineth against our will in us, can hinder us from

being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of the heavenly meat and drink."

Lastly: We see how vain are all endeavors after repentance before faith in Christ. It is only the love of God in Christ that can change the enmity of our hearts to love. It is only our love to God in Christ that can constrain us to live not unto ourselves but unto him. Therefore, the contemplation of God's love to us in Christ is the grand means of cultivating our repentance and accomplishing our conversion. It is as we look up to our crucified Forerunner on his throne, that the light of heaven streams down on our souls, and the attraction of God's holy love overcomes the attraction of earth and sin. Look to Jesus, your Saviour; believe in him and hope in his promise; then shall you run with patience the race set before you, and at last come to perfect rest, in the perfect enjoyment of his love.

LECTURE XLII.

THE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.

SECOND LECTURE.

THIRTY-THIRD LORD'S DAY.

THE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.

(SECOND LECTURE.)

QUEST. XCI. *But what are good works?*

ANS. Only those which proceed from true faith, are performed according to the law of God and to his glory; and not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men.

CLEAR and sufficient as this definition must be to the evangelical believer, it is nevertheless true that the subject involves radical questions of moral philosophy which have engaged the greatest and keenest minds from the beginning of inquiry to the present day. The results of these long, large, and able discussions have not been satisfactory, for the war of opinions is as vigorous as ever. It does not consist with our purpose to occupy ourselves at any length with controversies which have lasted for more than two thousand years, while it would be the extreme of presumption to attempt a settlement of them except from the plain teaching of Holy Scripture; yet a slight notice of the more important points in dispute is desirable for our future expositions of the matter before us, and also to show how impossible it is, without the wisdom from on high, to find the path of truth and virtue.

What is right? This question meets us at the very outset of moral investigation. All are practically agreed, however they may differ in terms or modes of

statement, that the doing of right is our highest duty and best wisdom. But what is right? or (for it amounts to the same thing), how shall we know what is right? From this point the leaders of opinion, with their several schools, widely diverge.

Right is a figurative term, synonymous with straight. But to ascertain whether or not our conduct is right or straight, we must have an undoubted, infallible, attainable rule by which to try it. Now, by what rule shall we try our moral acts? Some say, the rule is in our own souls. We are so constituted that the soul distinguishes right from wrong as necessarily and naturally as the eye perceives proportion or the ear harmony. Hence they give to what we ordinarily call conscience the name of moral sense. But, passing over some grave difficulties in this scheme, (as the imperfection of our moral nature which renders the judgment of our consciences untrustworthy, and the manifest fact of a diversity in the moral decisions of men,) we ask, if we be so constituted as to discern right and wrong, Who gave us this most eminent of all faculties? and, as the answer must be, God, we ask again, By what standard has he regulated all the consciences of men? Should we be answered, The fitness of things, (or the order of that constitution of things of which we form a part,) the difficulty is only moved a step farther back; for besides the impossibility of so comparing the innumerable parts of such a vast and complicated system as to ascertain what the fitness of things requires of us, we are forced to ask again, According to what rule did the Creator organize this constitution in which he has placed us? We, therefore, come inevitably to the question which has long been agitated by profound

thinkers: whether right and wrong are determined by the simple will of God, or by an eternal rule antecedent to and independent of the will of God?

It would be more curious than profitable to relate the many extravagant and even ridiculous arguments and suppositions advanced by the disputants on both sides, especially during the three centuries after the middle of the 13th, when the two schools of Thomas Aquinas and Dun Scotus (Erigena) convulsed the religious world of Europe with their subtle polemics. The Thomists held with Aquinas, who, though a champion of the Augustinian doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty, taught that God always wills right, but that he wills it because it is right, and that it is not right solely because he wills it. Hence they assumed the name of *Realists*: intimating that they held to a real, not an arbitrary distinction between right and wrong. On the other hand, the Scotists held that what God wills is right, simply because he wills it, and that had he commanded the opposite, which is now wrong, it would have been right, and that which is now right would have been wrong. Hence they were called *Nominalists*, because they held that right was right, and wrong wrong only because God declared them so to be, and not from any original quality in either of them.

A modest searcher after divine truth, not intoxicated by metaphysical subtleties, shrinks from adopting either extreme. In the first place, though the terms antecedent and independent are used only in a logical sense, we are shocked by the doctrine that anything in morals is before God, or independent of him in any sense: which would be, in effect, reviving the heathen doctrine of fate controlling the divinity. Then, again,

we are as much shocked by the bare supposition that God's determination of right and wrong is merely arbitrary, so arbitrary that he might have ordained the reverse. Let us see if there be not a way of satisfying ourselves more in accordance with our reverence for the God of the Bible.

The will of God flows from his divine nature, which is self-existent, eternal, and infinitely perfect. This infinite perfection implies perfect consistency in all the divine thoughts, purposes, and acts. For if any one of these were contrary to, or discordant with, any one other, he would not be perfect, because one or the other of the differings would be an imperfection. Thus we should place the eternal rule of right not in any mere arbitrary will of God, because his nature being infinitely, therefore unchangeably perfect, his will must be in accordance with his nature. Therefore the eternal law of right can be found only in the self-caused nature of God, or, in other words, the entire consistency of God with himself. Thus, on the one hand, the will of God in determining right is not arbitrary because it is consistent with his infinite nature; and on the other hand, right is not antecedent to or independent on God, because he is self-existent and eternal. The holiness of a moral creature is his conformity to the divine character so far as a finite being can resemble the infinite; the holiness of God is his infinitely perfect consistency with himself. If this view cannot resolve the difficulty of the schoolmen, it will, at least, relieve the mind of the child-like Christian who can submit himself only to God. To repeat what we said in the beginning, we must have a rule by which to try our moral conduct; and that rule must be ascertained,

simple, and infallible. We cannot delay our acts until we satisfy ourselves respecting the conclusions of general conscience, or the fitness of things; nor from what we have seen of men's differences in sentiment and opinion, could we ever come to an undoubted conclusion. When the most learned and ingenious disagree so widely, the great mass of mankind cannot be expected to distinguish between right and wrong. But when we take the law of God for our standard, we conform ourselves to the infinitely wise will of him who has made us and all things, thereby placing us in relations to a system so harmonious and settled that any violation of his law would be a violation of fitness, and any violation of fitness a violation of his law. We must go farther. It is not enough that we conform ourselves to the law of God, but we must take it as our rule, because it is the law of God. In other words, we must obey, not the law, but God from whom the law proceeds. Our duty is to God; his law is the rule which he has prescribed for the rendering of our duty. It is incorrect to speak of our obligation to right, or of duty to law. Right and law respect the relations of moral beings, but are not themselves moral beings, and, therefore, cannot themselves be objects of duty. That goes beyond or through the law to the being or beings with whom we are in relation. This is clearly shown by the scriptural fact that love is the fulfilling of the law, and by the summary of the law in supreme love to God and love to our neighbor as ourselves. Such an affection cannot be rendered to a law, or a principle, but can be given only to another conscious moral being. We cannot keep the law of God without supreme love to him, and

therefore our obedience is due to God who ordained the law, not to the law itself. It is, therefore, most unphilosophical to attempt a transference of our obedience from the will of God to a mere principle or rule, — an error they commit who would place our rule of right elsewhere than in the divine will. To tell me that I must do right simply because it is right, and not because it is the will of God, is to say that God should have no place in morals. It is true that God rewards those who do right, and punishes those who do wrong; but to put my obligation on that principle is to make God only a judge and an executioner. No; I must do right and avoid wrong, because I love him and it is his will that I should so order my conduct. Hence the Christian considers God to be the only object of all duty, our so-called duties to ourselves or our fellow-creatures being covered by our duty to him, because he has enjoined them upon us.

The ground of our duty to God is the fact that he is our Creator and the Creator of all things. All our faculties of soul and body were by him brought into existence out of nothing, and are by him maintained in existence. He, therefore, owns us and has a right to our entire service. As the Creator he is the Governor, Legislator, and Judge; every attribute of sovereignty is included by his creatorship. Our sense of obligation should be vastly enhanced by his infinite wisdom and goodness and holy excellence, and, above all, by the redemption in Christ Jesus; nay, it is by the exercise of these adorable attributes that our love to him is drawn out; but, nevertheless, the original basis of our moral obligation is our being his creatures. Does any one

ask me here, If God were other than good or holy, should I be bound to love him? or, if he commanded me to do anything contrary to right, should I feel myself bound to obey him? I reply that such questions are profane absurdities. I cannot conceive of God without infinitely perfect attributes. They are essential to my idea of God. Without them the imaginary being you talk of would not be God. I cannot consent, even in supposition, to put my God out of existence. I can have no knowledge, no thought, no being, except from my Creator. To him I belong; therefore is his law the rule of my life. He is infinitely excellent; I only know of excellence but from him. He is my Father, my Saviour, my Sanctifier, my all; therefore do I love him, and am conscious that it is my duty to make his will my own.

These considerations, though perhaps more abstruse, and apparently more abstract than those which are ordinarily brought before you, are far from unprofitable. On a correct understanding of the great truth of our obligation to God alone depend our correctness of belief in many consequent doctrines; and if we have grace to hold it fast, it will be a clue to guide us out of many a labyrinth where we should otherwise wander "in 'wondering mazes lost.'" If God be wrong, who shall tell us what is right? If God be right, what need of conjecture? We believe in God, and are not at liberty to make any question as to what is right or what is wrong from our own reason, but only to ascertain what he determines, and has declared by his law to be right or wrong. There alone can we rest.

Let us now turn to the exposition of the Catechism itself. The answer to the 91st Question defines "good

works" to be "only those which proceed from true faith [and] are performed according to the law of God and to his glory, and not such as are founded on our imaginations or the institutions of men."

1. It must be remembered that this definition occurs in an account of the new or converted man; and, therefore, that the phrase "good works" is used not in an absolute, but in the evangelical sense. To us sinners, who are acceptable to God only through the infinitely meritorious mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, "that which is without faith is sin," and our best deeds are offensive to God except as they are cleansed by the blood, covered by the righteousness, and presented by the intercession of our great Surety. It is also obvious that the Christian, who makes (as the Catechism goes on to say every converted man does) the word of God his only rule of right practice, must exercise faith in the truth of the Scriptures, which faith respects the justice of the divine commandments as well as the mercy of the divine promises, so that in proportion to the strength of our faith in the word of God will be our aim to comply with the divine will. Faith in Christ is necessary, therefore, not to the original or absolute goodness of a moral act, but to our recovery from the rebellion of sin, and the acceptableness of our imperfect obedience in the sight of God. Besides, every motion, desire, and endeavor to do right, which we have, is the effect of divine grace, "working in us both to will and to do of God's good pleasure," and this grace is ever given, and given only in answer to faith. Hence our Christian life can be maintained only by the exercise of a true faith, without which any good works on our part are impossible.

2. Those only are good works which "are performed according to the law of God."

a. We are the creatures of God, and therefore belong to him; so that his will, as declared to us in his law, is absolutely sovereign over us; and the only question we have a right to make respecting our conduct is: "What doth the Lord our God require of us?"

b. We are bought with a price ransomed from the power of Satan and from everlasting death by the most precious blood of Christ; and he has bought us to himself, as a peculiar (his own) people, zealous of good works; for which reason we are, by the power of his Holy Spirit, "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." If, therefore, we accept the redemption of Christ for our souls, we must, by divine help, assume the obligations which the purpose of the redemption implies, and walk (or order our practice) according to the rules ordained for us in the law of God. This should not be by any constraint of servile fear, but with the willingness which the most lively and paramount gratitude inspires. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Our whole life, in all its thoughts, affections, words, actions, and energies, is the thank-offering which we should render unto Christ for his unspeakable love in offering himself as a sacrifice to redeem us unto God.

c. Nay, more; God, accepting us in Christ his Son,

accepts us as his children ; and, as the proof and earnest of his Fatherly love, he sends into our hearts the spirit of his Son, which is the spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba, Father." We, therefore, should be "followers of God as dear children." As an affectionate child confides in his father's wisdom and love, desiring nothing so much as to obey his father's will, so the Christian, committing all that concerns him for life and death, time and eternity, to his heavenly Father's disposition, asks only what that Father would have him to do, and does it with his whole heart.

3. They must also be performed to the glory of God. This has been made evident by our previous considerations. The original and ultimate end of all things can be none other than the manifestation of the glory of their great Author ; and as the moral creature is the greatest of God's creatures, the obligation of all intelligent beings to manifest, by the beauty of obedient lives, the wisdom and holiness of the Creator's moral law is proportionately great. But the highest glory of God is placed by himself in the redemption of sinful men by the atonement of Christ, and their elevation by the grace of the Holy Ghost from the depths of guilty depravity to the perfect eternal holiness of heaven. Therefore are we doubly bound by our creation and redemption, nay, trebly, since we add the dedication of ourselves to glorify God by our bodies and spirits which are his. This can be done only by an entire conformity to the will of God, as made known by his work. What virtue of our own invention we may pretend to, if it have any praise, would be to our glory ; what duty we perform in obedience to the will of God, reflects glory on him. The light of the truth is our light only

because it shines upon us from God ; therefore does our Lord say, what is repeated in a thousand Scriptures : "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The motive of the divine glory is, therefore, essential to any good work of the Christian.

It may, however, be asked here, whether or not this motive of the divine glory should exclude from our hearts all motive of our own good, so that our obedience to God shall be perfectly disinterested. We answer that, so far from this being the case, such disinterestedness is not only not required, but from the nature of the case, impossible. God has from the beginning implanted in the moral creature a love of happiness and religion, instead of eradicating this strong motive-principle, addresses it by the strongest arguments, and directs it by the divine commandments. When God says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," he, by making it the measure of our love to our neighbor, recognizes our love of ourselves as just, and shows that without it we cannot know how to obey God in loving our neighbor. The sanctions of the divine law — life in reward of obedience, death in penalty of disobedience — can have no force except as self-love has power in our hearts. So we find our blessed Lord opposing the motives which worldly men have to sin, and hypocrites to an external form of piety, by saying that they have their reward, but that our heavenly Father himself will reward openly all those who serve him out of a sincere heart. According to which principle Moses acted when "he had respect unto the recompense of reward" ; nay, our Lord himself, the "great pattern of a Christian

life," when "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." We do not lose our will when we make the will of God our own; nor do we lose our happiness when we seek the glory of God which lies in the best happiness of his children. If I am bound to serve the welfare of my fellow-man because he is God's creature, I am bound for the same reason to seek my own welfare, since I am equally God's creature. Besides, the Christian cannot isolate himself. He belongs to a system, each part of which receives, as well as gives, influences for good or evil. God in Christ, and, before the necessity of redemption, God the Creator, is the head of the system from whom all the vital influences for good proceed, as to him the issues of praise return. We cannot, therefore, obey God without receiving our share of the benefit which our obedience works in the system. We cannot, therefore, and ought not to ignore our interest in doing the will of God, any more than we should seek to isolate ourselves from the constitution of things in which God has placed us. The glory of our heavenly Father is the blessedness of his children; therefore should we seek our own good in the way of his commandments, from the very desire we have for his glory.

If our foregoing demonstrations have been sound, the remaining part of the *answer* before us needs none.

1. The law of God being our only and sovereign rule, we have no right to mingle with it, or oppose it by, any imagination or thought of our own. It is not permitted us to do what we suppose or what seems to us right; we must do only that which God declares in

his blessed word to be right. The settlement of what is right or wrong is infinitely above our faculty. We must take the rule only from him who alone knows. Therefore we ought most religiously to guard ourselves from the temptation of acting from our impulses, our feelings, or opinions; for all these come out of a sinful heart, which is deceitful above all things. Our duty is to obey God, not ourselves; and this we do only when we rule our hearts and lives by the commandments he has given us in his holy word.

2. If we are not to obey our own imaginations, neither are we to obey the imaginations of other men, whether they come to us in traditions or decrees of churches, or dogmas of associations, or public opinion. Nothing is our duty but what God has commanded; and we, in effect, transfer our allegiance from him to the authority of sinners like ourselves, when we adopt any article into our creed, any ceremony into our worship, or any rule into our morality, which God has not expressly given. There is a strong tendency even in conscientious people to go astray here. They cannot resist the influence of those whom they think good or wise, nor refuse that which is plausibly expedient. So we find the Jews of our Lord's time following the traditions of the elders. Afterwards the Papal church tyrannized in the same manner over the consciences of the people; and among Protestants of our own day, methods of worship and reform, wholly from the inventions of men, are made paramount to the plainest dictates of Holy Scripture. Dearly beloved brethren, be not so deceived. You can render the God of the Bible no divided allegiance. If the opinion of men be your god, serve it; but if God who

gave us the Bible be your God, serve him alone. The Scripture was given that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and nothing is a good work which is not founded on "thus saith the Lord."

LECTURE XLIII.

THE ORDER, THE OBLIGATION, AND DIVISION OF THE
DUTIES ENJOINED BY

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

THIRTY-FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

QUEST. XCII. *What is the law of God?*

ANS. God spake all these words: I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it. Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. — EXODUS xx. 1-17. (Compare Deuteronomy v. 6-21, &c.)

QUEST. XCIII. *How are these Ten Commandments divided?*

ANS. Into two tables: The first of which teaches us how we must behave toward God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor.

IT having been settled by the previous teachings of the Catechism, according to the Scriptures, that the believer called to salvation in Jesus Christ is by the same gospel called to do good works, (86th, 87th, 88th,

89th Questions and Answers,) and also that "good works are only those which proceed from true faith [and] are performed according to the law of God and to his glory; not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men"; it becomes us to inquire what is the law of God, according to which all the conduct of men should be regulated; and we are taught to answer this question by a recital of the Decalogue, or ten commandments, as they are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, 1-17, collated with Deuteronomy v. 6-21; and the next eleven Lord's days are occupied with an exposition of the commandments in their order. They are divided into two tables, because Jehovah wrote them twice, once on two stone tablets prepared by himself (Deut. v. 22), which Moses let fall from his hands, and brake in his indignation at the people's idolatry of the golden calf (Ex. xxxii. 19); and a second time on two tables like the first, prepared, according to his order, by Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 1; Deut. x. 1). Which commandments were written on the first table, and which on the second, we are not expressly told, though it is certain that there were ten in all (Deut. iv. 13; x. 4). All are agreed that the first table included those duties which we owe immediately to God; the second, those he has commanded us to render him through duties to our fellow-men; which is in agreement with our Lord's condensation of the whole law into two great commandments: the first, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength;" the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37-40); the first of which we find in Deuteronomy vi. 5, and elsewhere;

the second, in Lev. xix. 18, 34. But here the Reformed with all the evangelical churches are at difference with the Jews, the Roman Catholics, and a large majority of the Lutherans. Our churches reckon four commandments to the first table, and six to the second. What division was established among the ancient Jews is not very clear. Josephus says (Ant. c. v. 8) that God showed them two tables with the ten commandments written upon them, five on each table, which according to the order of his enumeration would, against propriety, throw the fifth commandment into the first table instead of the second, which includes our offices to men (Ant. c. v. 5). Philo, however, appears to have considered the preface, "I am the Lord thy God," &c., to have been the first commandment; but as he omits, in his recital, the words of what we consider the first, passing over them to those, "Thou shalt not make any graven gods," &c., it would seem most probable that he conjoined the sense of the preface with the first commandment (in our order). Athanasius follows him in this.*

The Roman Catholics combine the first and second commandments, giving them in their catechisms abridged, so as to avoid the strength of the prohibition against employing images in their devotions. Thus, reducing the number of commandments in the first table to three, they are obliged, that they may keep the number ten, to divide the tenth into two, which is done by making the first clause of the tenth (as given Deut. v. 21, "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife,") the ninth, and the rest of it, the tenth; to which the Reformed churches object, as that would be merely a repe-

* See Jer. Taylor; Duc. Dub. B. II. Ch. 2, Rule 6.

tition of the seventh, whereas the closing precept is intended to forbid all envious craving of whatever is our neighbor's. Many of the Lutherans, being partial to pictures in churches for the illustration of divine truths to the laity, have followed the course of the Papists with regard to the disposition of the ten precepts; but it is fair to add that their best divines lay little stress on the matter, as Walchius, very famous among them, says: "Concerning the division of the Decalogue, there is much dispute. The doctors of the Reformed church give four precepts to the first table and six to the second, in doing which they separate from the first commandment what relates to the making of images, and rank it as the second commandment; but join the ninth and tenth as one. They contend fiercely for this division, and many of them [*Anhaltini, Marpurgenses atque alii*] accuse Luther of omitting the precept on image-making. We, however, give three precepts to the first table, and seven to the second, referring what God says against image-making to the first precept, and separating the ninth from the tenth. This discussion is of little account. The thing is that it may be arranged so as to give each the liberty of opinion on the division, for it is enough that the commandments be reckoned as ten." (Intro. in Lib. Ecc. Luth. Symbol, L. 1, vi. sec. xl. p. 657.) In this liberal sentiment the eminent Turretin agrees.*

A more important question arises:—

What proof have we that these ten commandments are binding upon us?

The delivery of this law of the two tables on Sinai by Jehovah to the hands of Moses for the people of

* See Kenrick (Bishop), Theol. Mor. de Decalogue, c. iv.

Israel was not its first promulgation. It had been the rule of God for man from the creation, though unwritten till the finger of God engraved it amidst the terrible glories of his presence. From the beginning he had claimed an entire sovereignty. The apostle tells us, in the first chapter of Romans, that men knew God from the creation of the world, and that idolatry in all its forms originated in their departure from the worship of the true, incorruptible God. Reverence for the name of God is a duty clearly consequent upon our allegiance and worship. The Sabbath was ordained in Eden on the day after the creation of man, while he yet was sinless. Honor to parents, respect of human life, purity as opposed to licentiousness, the right of property, veracity or truthfulness, are all virtues essential to a social constitution in which men were placed by their divine author, and were required by him always, as many facts in the early sacred history show. The final precept, "Thou shalt not covet," enforces the keeping of the heart before him who reads our thoughts, and is a resumption of the previous five, while the necessity of such inward restraint to a secure morality was fully shown by the manner of the original sin, for had not the man and woman first lusted after the forbidden fruit, they had not seized it.

We learn also from Holy Scripture, that the solemn, written enunciation of this law was an act of God's merciful care over his people. He had, as the apostle tells us (Gal. ii. 8, 17), preached the gospel to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before, when he made a covenant with the father of all the faithful, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." His natural posterity, though increased to a very considerable

people, had never been raised to the style of a distinct, free, independent nation, until Jehovah, taking his place as their king, led them out of the land of Egypt, with a promise of bringing them into the land promised by him to their fathers. It was requisite, therefore, that there should be a glorious inauguration of his authority, with a publication of the laws, or constitution, according to which he would reign; and on the other hand, that the people should declare their fealty to their Theocrat by pledging themselves to obey his laws or accepting the constitution which he gave them. Hence the transaction at Sinai was in fact a covenant, God manifesting himself on the mount, Israel protesting, with united voice, "All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient;" in token of which "Moses took the blood" of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, "and sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words'" (Ex. xxiv. 3-8). You will observe that, according to the analogy of all Scripture, Israel stood before the Lord in a double capacity, as a political nation, and as a church,—as the natural offspring of Abraham, and as the type (the truly faithful among them included by the reality) of the spiritual descendants of the father of all the faithful, the seed of the promised seed,* the church of Christ which he hath redeemed out of all ages and all kindreds of the world. The inference plainly is, that the law is binding on us, who profess allegiance to God through the covenant in the blood of Christ; not the political law, which concerned Israel as a nation, or the ceremonial, which was done away by Christ, the substance of its

* Compare Gal. iii. 16, and Isaiah liii. 10, 11.

shadows and the reality of its types, but the moral law, the law of the ten precepts on the two tables, which, as they had been binding on men from the beginning of the world until Sinai, are binding, since then, until the end of the world.

This is the more obvious from the indisputable consideration, that, as the effect of faith, according to the evangelical scheme, is to produce repentance in the converted sinner by working love in his heart, and so enabling him to overcome the temptations of the world, it must follow that the genuine effects of saving faith are in all ages the same; and, therefore, the fundamental rules or principles of a godly life are in all ages the same. Precepts which only affect men in the regulation of their conduct under a temporary and changeable system, such as the national polity, or typical preparatory ritual of the Jews, may, for that reason, be changed or abrogated; but those which are essential to our relations as human creatures with God, and with our fellow-creatures under the social system God has ordained for us on earth, must be perpetual. Such are the ten commandments.

Thus we find this, the moral law, confirmed by our Lord and the writers of the New Testament, as the rule of life for all believers. Every precept of the two tables is reinforced, often in the very same language and with a distinct recognition of the source from which they are taken, as the ground of the authority.

Exception has, it is true, been by some taken with respect to the fourth commandment, ordaining the rest of the Sabbath in order to its sanctification. That commandment, they say, is *ceremonial*, therefore belonging to the law of ordinances which has been abol-

ished; and *typical*, relating to the "spiritual rest," or freedom from the necessity of our own works, as ground of justification, that God may perform his works in us for his own glory. We shall examine this matter farther when we come to the particular study of the fourth commandment; but at present it is enough to say that on the same principles which require us to take the law of the two tables, we must take it as a whole. God himself divided the moral, the political, and the ceremonial laws from each other, so that we have no right to wrench any part out of one to put it in one of the others.* Besides, the law of the Sabbath was given to our first parents while yet sinless in Eden, and therefore to the whole race, irrespective of national or ceremonial or accidental distinctions of any kind; nor had it, whatever typical character it acquired afterwards, any such character at the time of its original promulgation. The Saviour himself, when he asserted that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," not only points out the spirit of the precept in which it is to be obeyed, but establishes the universality and perpetuity of the precept.

There is another remark preliminary to our exposition of the commandments, which, in consistency with our past and future reasoning, should here be made.

The answer to the 93d Question states that "the first" table "teaches us how we are to behave towards God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor." This language, though conformable enough to the common uses of the terms, is not strictly, that is to say, ethically, accurate. Properly, we owe duty only to God. He only is our Lord. What are popularly

* Calvin's Cat. on the Fourth Commandment.

termed duties to our neighbor are not, therefore, in a strict sense, duties to him, but duties to God, who has commanded us so to deport ourselves toward our neighbor as his precepts prescribe. That this is the meaning of the Catechism here, we know from what Ursinus (its chief author) says in his commentary on the place: "The Decalogue is divided, according to the things themselves which are commanded or forbidden, into the *immediate and mediate worship of God*. Generally, is commanded in the Decalogue the worship of God; that which is contrary to God's worship is forbidden. The worship of God is either *immediate*, when moral works are performed immediately unto God, or *mediate*, when moral works are performed unto our neighbor in respect of God. . . . The obedience of the second table of the law is not the immediate worship of God, as the obedience of the first is; yet is it the mediate worship of God, that is, such as is performed to God in our neighbor mediating, or coming between God and us. For the duties [offices] of love toward our neighbor ought to flow, or proceed, out of the love of God [*qu.* love to God]; and being so performed, they are acceptable to God, and are no less done to God himself than the obedience of the first table. . . . The worship required in the two tables differeth in [character of] its objects: for the first table has an immediate object only, which is God; the second has both an immediate object, our neighbor, and farther also a mediate object, God." Hence Ursinus, in his sermon on the Decalogue, comprises it generally in God's worship, divided into two parts: 1. Immediate, towards God alone; 2. Mediate, or towards our neighbor for God's sake.

The value and even necessity of this careful application of terms over the looser language of the text will be seen when we consider the proneness of men to separate the two tables in such a way as though they might observe the first table without observing the second, or the second without observing the first. The former is the fatal error of those pharisaical devotees who are zealous in prayers or other forms of worship, in orthodoxy of opinion or ceremonial, while they neglect charity of heart and speech and act towards their fellow-creatures. The unity of the law of God utterly condemns such inconsistency, and shuts the gate of heaven in the faces of all who practise it. There is no love to God which is not followed by, or rather does not include, love to our neighbor; which is farther shown by the fact that we cannot, as in the address Christ has taught us, claim God as our Father in heaven, without acknowledging as our brethren all his children on earth. The other is the equally fatal error of those who, proud of their personal and social morality, think that they can keep the second table of the law without observing the first, or love their neighbor without first loving God with all their hearts, and rendering him the personal and public homage which he requires. The very source of the law condemns this, because being the law of God, no part of it can be kept without hearty and supreme reverence to the will of him who enjoins the whole. The very order of the law condemns it, because we cannot reach the second table without going through the first. The very terms of the law condemn it, because, if we are to love God with *all* our heart, how can we love our neighbor except love to him be included by our love to God?

Again: If we do not make this distinction, that is, of duties immediate and duties mediate to God, all morality is thrown into uncertainty and confusion. If God be the central source and central object of all duty, no laws emanating from him, no services rendered to him, can ever clash, as no number of straight lines, drawn from a given point, can ever cross each other, or, converging to one point, can ever meet except in that point. While, therefore, we consider our duty referrible to God only, there can be no confusion. All we have to ascertain, is, what God requires of us, and all our relative services toward our fellow-men fall into their appropriate places within the harmonious whole. But when we attempt to apportion or distribute our services among our fellow-men, as though our duty were to each of them, we find the number of relations so great, yet so intermingled, that we cannot see how, amidst the variety and seeming conflict of interests, to combine them in harmonious proportions. How shall a man proportion the duty he owes to his father with the duty he owes to his mother, when their commands or seeming interests are adverse? — the duties he owes to conflicting brothers? — the duties to his family with those he owes to his country, or those to his country with those due to the world? No human intellect has grasp or continuity enough to reason through all the possibilities of results, to determine one of a thousand among the difficulties which may, and every day do, arise. Invariable, supreme love to God is the only clue we can have to guide us through what is plain to him, but an inextricable labyrinth to us.

Take, for example, the question which Arch-Deacon Paley moots in his *Moral Philosophy* (a system which

should never be tolerated for a moment under any pretext in a Christian school): *Is it ever right to tell a lie?* If we proceed on the principle that all our duty is to God, the thing is settled at once, for God requires truth in the heart, speech, and act; nor can we imagine it possible that in any circumstances a lie can be acceptable to him; but if, adopting the division which Paley follows, of duty to God and duty to man, the latter separates itself from the first, and we attempt to decide it on the comparative benefit or injury of the results to ourselves or others. Thus the Arch-Deacon asserts that a lie is justifiable in certain cases, as, "compliments in the subscription of a letter; a servant's denying his master [to be at home]; a prisoner's pleading not guilty; an advocate asserting the justice, or his belief in the justice, of his client's cause. In such instances, no confidence is destroyed, because none was reposed; no promise to speak the truth is violated, because none was given or understood to be given." Or "where the person you speak to has no right to know the truth, or, more properly, where little or no inconvenience results from the want of confidence in such cases: as where you tell a falsehood to a madman for his own advantage; to a robber, to conceal your property; to an assassin, to defeat or divert him from his purpose. The particular consequence is, by the supposition, beneficial; and as to the general consequence, the worst that can happen is, that the madman, the robber, the assassin will not trust you again; which (beside that the first is incapable of deducing regular conclusions from having been once deceived, and the last two not likely to come in your way a second time) is sufficiently compensated by the immediate benefit which

you proposed by the falsehood." What miserable paltering is this! If a lie is to be justified by mere expediency, or by any man's judgment of expediency, how shall we know when we meet falsehood or when we meet truth? How can it be, that, under the universal, perpetual, and particular providence of God, who is infinitely true, a falsehood can ever issue except in disorder and mischief? Even if the immediate issue be slight or even apparently beneficial, is not the general importance of truth incomparably above such petty, doubtful considerations? Yet we cannot see, how, under such a system, any better reasoning could be pursued. There are cases, undoubtedly, in which we are not under obligation to speak at all, or even when silence is duty; but if we speak, and speak not truth, we serve the devil, who is the father of lies, and we shall, if we repent not in Christ, have our portion with him under the wrath of a just God, who has made truth a duty to himself, and a lie a sin against himself. The question cited is but one of innumerable that will arise under a system of ethics other than that which makes God the only object of duty.

For this reason we shall adopt, in all our subsequent study of the moral law, the division of duty into duties to God *immediate* and *mediate*, — those we should render to God directly, and those we should render to him through his creatures in serving them for his sake, according to his command.*

* This is the division adopted and pursued by Ursinus. See his Commentary on the Catechism here.

LECTURE XLIV.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

SECOND PART.

THIRTY-FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

QUEST. XCIV. *What doth God enjoin in the first command?*

ANS. That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone; with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will.

QUEST. XCV. *What is idolatry?*

ANS. Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive or have any other object in which men place their trust.

FOLLOWING the division of duties enjoined by the ten commandments, as set forth in our last lecture, viz: those we owe to God immediately, that is, directly to himself, and those we owe to him mediately, that is, through his creatures, we now proceed to the study of the first table of the law, comprising the first four commandments, each of which has immediate reference to God himself.

The first of these is fundamental and comprehensive, including, with a force peculiar to itself, the spirit of the other three, each of which has a specific, particular direction. Thus, the *first* forbids our giving to any creature the place, homage, trust, love, or obedience which belongs to the one only God. The *second* forbids our having low, material, or sensuous notions of

God, and all practices that tend to impair our belief and recognition of his pure, spiritual nature. The *third* forbids all profane or undevout use of the names, titles, and authoritative sentences of God, and all practices that tend to impair the awful supreme respect in which those divine terms, with their significations, should be held. The *fourth* enjoins our worship and pious remembrance of God our only Creator and Lord, especially on the Sabbath-day, which he has consecrated for that holy purpose; and all practices that tend to impair our devotion generally, but, particularly, our proper observance of the day he has set apart for himself.

These commandments are given in a negative form, but they enjoin positively: 1. Supreme acknowledgment of God. 2. Practical belief in his essential spirituality, that is, spirituality of essence or mode of being. 3. Reverence, internal and external, for the authority of God, and all that relates to the exercise of his authority. 4. Worship of God, internal and external, and cultivation of whatever means he has ordained for our worship of him. The order of these precepts and of the duties they enjoin is natural and necessary, showing us that the Decalogue is not merely a collection of commandments, but a system of morals in which each has its appropriately relative place.

The *FIRST* of these is the subject of our lesson for to-day. "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*"

The idea of God is fundamental to all religion and morals; for religion is the honoring of God, and morals the obeying of God. Proof of the existence and character of God is not in place here, that having been given in another part of our exposition, and now by the Catechism is considered established. But it is

required that we know what is meant by the term *God*.

FIRST: The use of the word in the plural and the phrase "other gods" show that God is not a personal name, but a title, or official appellation, which truly belongs to the One Supreme only, but has been and may be usurped by others, or falsely applied to others; as the apostle says (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6): "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth as there be gods many and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him,—and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The word rendered god, or gods, in the Old Testament, literally signifies *high ones*, and thus comparatively is applied to angels, and even to princes or exalted personages among men, as David says: "I will praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee." But it is more frequently given to the imaginary beings, or their visible representatives, whom men, departing from true religion, worshipped and invoked in the place of the Creator, who is God over all, blessed forever. These false gods were numerous, each nation and often each family having their tutelary divinities; nay, there was not a kingdom or process of nature, not a wind or stream or mountain or tree, that had not, according to the popular creed, its particular divinity. Such an ascription of divine power to more than one supposed being, or division of it among many, was a gross insult to him whose will is the sole efficient energy pervading all things, as he created all things, and is, therefore, forbidden by the commandment. The Sovereign Giver of the law in his preface distinguishes

himself from the gods of the nations, saying to Israel: "I am the LORD [Jehovah] *thy* God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." By which he does not allow the gods of the nations to be real, but, asserting his own as the sole divinity, declares that he has taken Israel under his almighty care, revealing himself by his name, JEHOVAH. This was the title by which he required his people to worship him; yet it is no more than God a personal name, but one descriptive of his nature. Attempts have been made to define its meaning, but without satisfactory result; that which approaches nearest is parallel to the description of himself when he revealed his presence to Moses, saying, "I AM THAT I AM,"—an expression declaring at once the eternity, the self-existence and incomprehensibility of his being. It is well here to note that the most ancient of the *Theistic* philosophers, whom we find far back in the primitive sects of mankind after the flood, as the Chaldean, from whom the Platonists and Gnostics learned their uses of language, held it impious to give a name to the Highest, or to attempt in any way a description of his essence, but called him THE ONE. It is also remarkable, that, among cultivated nations at least, though they worshipped many inferior deities, whose favor they invoked and whose anger they deprecated, there was, as there is now among the idolatrous peoples of the East, a belief in one original divinity, whom they did not worship because they thought him too sublimely absorbed in his own perfections to care for them or their service. Nay, there is sound reasoning for believing that idolatry, at the beginning of its deplorable evils, was not an

invention of false deities by the mind seeking after divinity, but a departure from the worship of the true God who had revealed himself to the fathers of our race. Nor was it so much a denial of the true God as the putting between themselves and him inferior beings, or powers, who exercised over them immediately an authority and control derived from the original one. This is seen in the fact that Aaron, when he, at the impious demand of the Israelites for gods to go before them, copied, in what our translators call a golden calf, the Egyptian emblem of the productive or agricultural power, and then proclaimed a feast in honor of the idol as a feast to Jehovah (Exodus xxxii. 4, 5), he meant, and the people understood him to mean, not that they denied the supremacy of Jehovah, but that they worshipped him as represented by the idol. So the apostle (Romans i. 20-23) says of the heathen: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, [that is, they did not give him the spiritual homage due to an infinite spirit,] neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God [that is, the eternal, immaterial God] into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Whatever was afterwards the utterly brutish reliance on such dumb idols and gross fictions of their depraved fancy, they did not intend at the beginning anything more than to represent by such emblems the power of the true God, whose spiritual perfections they were too gross to apprehend. Hence we see that the real nature of idolatry is nothing else than a depraved tendency of sensualized man to give to things which are seen the trust and regard

which should go through them and above them to the invisible God, to rest in the creature rather than in the Creator, and rely on the palpable means instead of the spiritual directing cause. This is in exact accordance with the definition of idolatry as given by the answer to the 95th Question.

"Idolatry is, instead of, or beside, the one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive [invent, imagine] or to have any other object in which men place their trust." Whatever be the object to which we give the trust or any part of the trust due to the Infinite Supreme, thus putting it between us and him, is in the commandment called a *god*. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

We are now prepared to learn,

SECONDLY: *What God doth enjoin in the first command.*

The answer in the Catechism is very instructive and particular, showing that by the word *trust*, in the definition of idolatry, are included all those dispositions and acts of the soul comprehended by the worship and service of the one true and only God. It (the answer) has two parts,—the one teaching us what the command forbids, the other what it requires. If we ascertain the truths in the latter, we shall clearly understand those in the former.

I. We, or, as our church bids us each answer for himself, "I," must "learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone; with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart, so that I renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit [do] even the least thing contrary to his will."

Here are several divisions of the great duty we owe to God.

1. Right knowledge of God. The command expressly forbids any other gods but the one Jehovah or Lord. To imagine him, either from ignorance or waywardness, to be in any respect other than he is, is not to acknowledge the true God, but to set up in his place a creature of our own fancy; and as we cannot know God otherwise than from himself, it is our primary duty to know what he is from his own revelation of himself in the Scriptures; therefore our ideas of God are true only so far as they are conformable in character and degree to those given of him in his own word. There are mysteries in the divine nature as far above our comprehension as the infinite is above the finite; but the Spirit, which "searcheth even the deep things of God," has declared all that it is profitable for us to know this side of heaven, and no more. There is no reasoning beyond this, because we have no facts from which to draw inferences, no data on which to found our conclusions. We have no more right to go beyond what is written than we have to withhold our belief from what is written. The God of the Bible is the one only true God.

2. Trust in him. The Scripture reveals him as infinitely perfect in all his attributes; and, therefore, his absolute government must be infinitely wise and just, and, in Christ, full of goodness and mercy toward all who acknowledge him to be their God. Hence, if we rightly know God, our confidence will be complete, unhesitating, unfaltering, and full of peace. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Such trust will make us humbly and patiently submissive to all his

dispensations, however trying or unintelligible, towards us ; for are we not wholly dependent on him, and is it not his omnipotent, unchangeable will to provide for his children's best good in the future as at the present, in time and in eternity ? When there is perfect confidence in God, there can be neither discontent, impatience, or despondency. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" ; therefore the past, the present, the future in his almighty hands are right. Therefore our Lord taught us to pray to him as our Father in heaven, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ;" and himself, our divine example of human piety, when passing through his unutterable grief for our atonement, took the cup into his trembling hand, saying, "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

3. The love of our whole hearts. Love is the grand attraction by which God unites all holy, intelligent creatures to himself, and in him to each other. It is the union which secures the harmony of the godly in Christ. We love that which we admire and delight to contemplate ; and God is the original and infinite perfection of all that is worthy of our admiration and delight ; therefore should he have our affectionate, glad adoration : we love those from whom we receive the elements and means of our happiness ; and God is the author and giver of all good : we love those who love us, and have fellowship with us ; and God loves us with an everlasting, boundless, tender love, as his creatures, his servants, and children ; therefore should we give him our first, best, highest love ; nay, our hearts should be so filled with love to him that no love to any creature can find room within it, except as it is com-

prehended and sanctified by supreme affection, esteem, gratitude, and desire for the one only true God.

4. Fear. Not the terror which the power of an enemy inspires, nor the servile dread which forces submission to a hard, irresistible master ; but a reverence filling the heart that is filled with love, an awful homage to his sovereign majesty, humble veneration of his infinite attributes, jealous caution lest we offend against his will, and a constant sense of his holy presence searching our thoughts and taking account of all our doings. The devils tremble while they believe in the vindictive authority of the one only true God ; but the angels veil their faces and worship close to the glory of his throne : so his true children never love him more or obey him more gladly than when, bowing lowest at his feet, they adore him Lord over all, and acknowledge that in him alone they "live and move and have their being."

5. The result of this knowledge, trust, love, and fear of God, the only God, is an *entire consecration to his service* ; or, as the Catechism has it, we "glorify him with our whole heart, so that we renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit the least thing contrary to his will." God is our creator, therefore he is our owner ; he is our only king, therefore we are his subjects alone ; he is our only teacher, therefore we should learn from him alone ; he is our only benefactor, therefore our whole lives should be thank-offerings to his love ; he is before all things, and by him all things consist, therefore is he alone "worthy to receive honor and glory and blessing." So the true believer in the one only God makes it the purpose of his heart, as it is the purpose of his creation, to glorify God

in all his thoughts and words and ways, that his Maker may delight in him, and men, "seeing his good works, may glorify his Father which is in heaven."

II. The sin forbidden by the command is the opposite of all this. It "enjoins," as the Catechism says, "That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my soul, avoid and flee from all *idolatry*;" and idolatry, as defined in answer to the next question, is the having any other object of trust than the one true God. Whenever, therefore, we give to any creature that which belongs to God only, we are idolaters, and the object of such impious trust is an idol. It matters not what it is: an image cut out of wood or stone, an imagination of our own as to what God is or should be, the laws or processes of nature, worldly possessions, honor or opinions, relatives or friends, human skill, wisdom, or power, — whatever it be, if we so set our hearts upon it as to bring it between us and God, it is an idol. In these days Christianity has so far enlightened us Protestants that none of you, my hearers, would do such an absurd thing as to set up an altar, offer sacrifices, and make prayers to any created thing. Yet we are scarcely less idolaters if, for any reason, we turn away from God and put our trust elsewhere, instead of depending on him alone, and on him as he has made himself known by his divine word. Idolatry is a great sin, but atheism is, if possible, a greater. It is a gross, profane absurdity to worship a false god; but what shall be said of those who worship no God? Yet such is their atheism, who do not by a hearty homage, trust, and affection glorify him in whom their "breath is and in whose hands are all their ways." There are few irreligious persons among the heathen; such as

their religion is, they practise it; but among us the irreligious are many: they know too much to worship images; they are not willing to worship the God of the Bible; and, therefore, they worship no God at all. God is not in their thoughts; they do not seek him, or trust in him, or obey him, or give him glory. They "love the world and the things of the world," but "the love of the Father is not in them." Will not God be avenged of such sinners as these?

There has always been a disposition in mankind to pry into the future, or things hidden from mere human knowledge; hence the practice in all ages and countries of what is comprehended under the general name of *divination*. The term itself shows that it is an attempt, from extraordinary signs in nature which is under divine control, from some spiritual being superior in knowledge to ourselves, or mortal supposed to be supernaturally endowed or inspired, to learn that which the true God has not revealed. It is most probable, that, as idolatry was originally a departure from the true God, so *divination* began with profane attempts to counterfeit the miraculous signs and portents by which God, in early ages, made known his presence and his will, as also the prophecies which he caused to be uttered by men immediately under his impulse. The origin of *magic* in Chaldea, near the cradle of our postdiluvian race, whence it passed into India (where it received that name), Egypt, and other parts of the world, is a strong indication of this. The arts of such divination have been so various and many, that volumes could not enumerate them; and the Catechism makes mention of only four or five.

1. *Sorcery*, which is a resort to the evil spirit,

who, according to a very early belief, was a being of great malignity in power and wisdom, rivalling the spirit of good. A modern name for it is diabolism, devilism, or the black art. To ask counsel or aid of the devil is flat insult to the true God.

2. *Soothsaying*, as it is in the Dutch (*waer segginge*), or, as it is in the German,* superstitious resort to charms or incantations (*abergläubische Sagen*), comprehends all use of enchantments and consultation of persons pretending skill in such deceits.

3. *Superstition*, which is an over-credulity, attributing, without reason or scriptural faith, meanings and effects to things and occurrences with which they have no connection,—as, thinking Friday an unlucky day, or a comet ominous of disaster, or that chances at cards, or fortune-telling tables, show any facts beyond ordinary providence and the revealed Scriptures. (It is noteworthy here, that superstition is distinguished from veneration of the true God by always producing gloom and dread. It is “the spirit of fear,” as opposed to “the spirit of love and of power and of a sound mind.”) In a word, whatever notion or act, especially in attempting to get a knowledge of, or control over, things not shown us by God in nature or the Bible, which is not consistent with a simple trust in his overruling providence and grace. We must not delude our pride by thinking such profane follies peculiar to heathen nations and darker ages. Superstition, in various forms, is rife among us at this very time, and will continue to prevail until Christian faith, enlightening reason, has cast out all power of the devil from our hearts. In-

* There is a variation here from the German in the Dutch version.

deed, it would seem to have received a new impulse, and to meet with ready dupes, since so-called spiritualism, (which is nothing else than necromancy, or supernatural communication with departed spirits,) the silliest of all divining contrivances, has obtained so wide a credence, and that even among cultivated minds. No true Christian, worshipping the true God, should give the slightest heed to such miserable impiety, nor will he be ensnared by it so long as he maintains a lively faith in the promises of his heavenly Father; for then he will believe none but the God of the Bible, and desire to know no more than what God teaches him. Hence our church, at the celebration of the Lord's supper, solemnly and peremptorily bars from its precious privileges “all enchanterers, diviners, charmers, and those who confide [or put faith] in such enchantments.” Let us, beloved, seeing how weak our human nature is, beware, lest we also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from our own steadfastness. “Let us walk in the light as children of the light, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”

4. *Invocation of saints or other creatures*. This sin is pronounced by our church, in her form for the Lord's supper, as not at all compatible with genuine faith. In both places, worship of deceased saints and even angels, by invoking their aid or asking them to intercede for us with God, as practised and approved by the Papal church, is particularly aimed at and denounced. It is nothing else than a practice of ancient heathenism, which made gods of dead heroes, or kings, or wise men, and therefore should have no place among Christians. It is the extreme of irrationalism

to dream that a human spirit can have the omnipresent heart-searching faculty of God, so as to hear our prayers and know our thoughts; nor is there a word of Scripture to encourage a thought that God has ever committed, or will commit, such power upon any creature. There is one, "and but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who is also Immanuel God with us." It is a fiction of antichrist, to give to any other the prerogative which is Christ's alone, and therefore violates the first and greatest of all the commandments.

You see, then, brethren, how great a blessing we enjoy in the Scriptures of our Christian faith. "The world by wisdom [of its own] knew not God;" and when unwilling to have his holy image in their thoughts, they ceased to worship him, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth; they sank into all the irrational, degrading, cruel, lascivious vices of heathenism. We pity their stupidity; we abhor their practices. Yet such were our own ancestors, and such should we ourselves be, but for the light of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Jehovah, who led his ancient Israel out of the house of bondage, has led us and our fathers out of worse slavery. Let us bless his holy name, and, offering him the undivided homage of our hearts, entreat him, while we rely only on his grace, to keep us from falling.

Remember, also, dearly beloved, that it needs not a sculptured image, or invocation of a demon, or charm, or incantation, to constitute idolatry. Whatever comes between us and God, receiving the trust which should be put in him alone, or shutting out from us the blessed

light which shines in his gracious countenance, is an idol.

Nay, if we do not know him and Jesus Christ, worshipping him, through our only Mediator, with all the love of our hearts, all the adoration of our minds, all the strength of our souls, we are idolaters, because we may be sure that some creature has come between us and him. Let these awful words, O Holy Spirit, be written deep in our hearts:—

"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."

LECTURE XLV.

ON THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF IDOLATRY.

THIRTY-FIFTH LORD'S DAY.

ON THE

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF IDOLATRY.

THE religious worship of any object other than the Infinite Supreme is so contrary to pure reason, and the prevalence of the monstrous error, where an immediate or a written revelation has not shed its divine light, so nearly universal, that the origin and history of idolatry should excite a grave curiosity in the mind of every thoughtful Christian. The evident proneness of our race to the deadly sin, and the deep moral degradation by which it is infallibly accompanied and followed, render the inquiry one of the utmost practical importance. There is the more need of thoroughly investigating the subject, from the fact, too little known, that the specious but deadly sophistries of infidel speculators, especially those of the French School during the last century, have been suffered to pervade the treatises of Christian students, and thence the opinions of Christians generally. We must refute and utterly repudiate their falsities before we can take the first step in the right direction; nor will the refutation be difficult if we meet them at their starting-point, and compare their imaginary data with the statements of Scripture, and the corroboration of those statements by reason and history.

The grand falsity of these philosophers, and the basis on which they have built all their scheme, is the assumption that barbarism and ignorance was the original

state of man; and that, by the force of natural reason acting on the inconveniences and growing necessities of such a state, they have evolved the cultivation of the soil, the laws of property, general virtue, the combinations of government, in a word, the whole social system; nay, ignorant in a great degree of natural causes, and stimulated by a desire of happiness, which the least experience taught them was beyond their ability to secure, they sought the aid and deprecated the wrath of a higher power, and so constructed a religion in the worship, first, of perceptible forces, as, light, wind, the flow of waters, vegetation, — then, of imaginary beings, invisible but ever active, controlling those forces. These they represented to the eye by various forms, principally an exaggeration of the human, grotesque, or beautiful, according to their taste, clothing them with appropriate attributes and symbols. When knowledge increased, and cultivated reflection showed them the need of a yet higher authority to which men should feel themselves responsible, they attained the ideas of a Supreme Being and a future state of reward and punishment. The more atheistical of the anti-scriptural theorists ridicule all such efforts after religion as slavishly superstitious, and denounce religion itself as an imposture of priests and tyrants combining to hold the vulgar in subjection by visionary terrors; hence the atheism of revolutionary France; but those who are not willing to deny God a place in the universe, contend that all religion has been a legitimate, gradual discovery by the human soul seeking after truth, as the poet expresses it: —

“Through nature up to nature's God.”

This scheme, as you see, finds man living apart in a

wilderness, scarcely raised above the wild brutes, subsisting by the chase or fishing, and on vegetables of spontaneous growth, — then, as families increased, and these resources became inadequate, contriving the arts of life and the morals requisite for communities, of which religion is the highest. Two facts are thus admitted, which we note, because useful to our future argument and fatal to that of our opponents: first, that man had a beginning; secondly, that he has a natural tendency towards religion, as necessary to the development of his better condition. The human savage could not have sprung into being uncaused, and with filial instinct must have sought his author.

The scheme is, however, contradicted by all history and the traditions of our race. We have no accredited instance of a people elevating themselves out of barbarism to civilization without foreign aid. Some plausible attempts have been made to adduce instances of the kind, as the ancient Mexicans and the Greeks, the civilization of both of whom have been claimed to be indigenous; but, putting aside other facts which our time will not allow us to cite, the great fact cannot be questioned, that there was civilization in the world antecedent to their rise. The source from which the Mexican sprang, and their early condition, are too deeply obscure to permit any theory of their growth, though the character of their monuments strongly savors of an eastern transoceanic kindred. But with regard to European, or, indeed, the whole of the old-world civilization, we can — unless we ignore the universal voice of classical antiquity, backed by proof in the names of places, rivers, mountains, and cities, fixing unalterably the main truth of their traditions — trace

the transfer of grafts of civilization from the farthest east to the ultimate north. Greece avowed her derivation of culture from Asia and Egypt. The very names about the Athenian Acropolis perpetuate those of the Egyptian immigrants who introduced laws and arts among her aboriginal Pelasgi. From the beginning of her annals, down to the northern invasion, her people, philosophers as well as the illiterate, regarded the eastern lands much as we Americans regard Europe. Their religious system and ceremonies were to a great extent the same as the Egyptian. The most trusted oracle of all was that of Jupiter Ammon in the Libyan desert, and he was clearly the Osiris of Egypt and probably the Ham of the Ethiopians; while the Egyptians themselves frankly owned that they had derived their system, religious and philosophical, from a far more remote period. We all know the influence of Greece over Italy, and of Italy over northern Europe; nay, that maritime part of Italy about the modern Naples and eastward to the sites of Crotona and Lybaris, are full of evidences that Egyptian influences were there long before those of Greece. Similar, though not so distinct, traces of Phœnician emigration may be found in more northern Europe as in Southern France and in Ireland, or, if we credit acute ethnologists, in various other regions. From Europe civilization has come here to the western continent, and is now rolling back the tide over the decayed nations from which it originally flowed. All this, and in many ways we have no time to particularize, points backward and backward until we reach the acknowledged seat of the first human philosophy in Chaldea, close to the region which Scripture makes the second cradle of the race, where the

great temple of Babel, or Baal, or Bel, or Belus, was built, and whence was the dispersion of the nations. We find the notion of man's original barbarism nowhere in antiquity, but always the reverse, — a chief proof of which was the general traditionary belief in a golden age when man was fresh from the creating power, of which Hesiod, as old as Homer, or, as many think, older, gives a glowing description, accompanied with many other asserted facts corroboratory of our position. Allow us but the one fact, that man had a beginning, and his origin must be attributed to a creator, — then it is impossible to believe that the intelligent cause who gave him such a wonderful being, physically, intellectually, and morally, would have introduced his creature into the world a mere savage and without knowledge of Him "in whom his breath was and in whose hands were all his ways," or, as the heathen poet, quoted by Paul on Areopagus, says, whose "offspring" he was.

It is remarkable also, and as susceptible of clear proof as it is remarkable, that men, so far from becoming more moral and religious as they descended from antiquity, actually grew worse and worse. This was seen in the history of their philosophy, as well as in that of the people; nor were they ever weary — philosophers, poets, historians, and moralists — of praising the ancient manners and regretting their decay. In the same manner we hear them always ascribing their religious habits to the example of the past, never claiming them as inventions of their own. One of the finest passages of Plato, respecting the existence of divine power and the duty of worship, is an indignant burst of astonishment that any could doubt the gods, when

they all had been taught the elements of religion on their nurses' laps and at their mother's knee, and by the unanimous example of all people, civilized and barbarian, who worship in temples and bow down at the rising and setting of the sun. A clear acknowledgment that such faith was traditionary. Indeed, so universal was this reference to divinity, that all the older, more eminent legislators and teachers claimed the respect of the multitude on account of a divine inspiration. The founders of states boasted a divine lineage. Lycurgus in Greece, as Numa in Rome, asserted themselves to be the mediums of divine instruction. Pythagoras, at once the head of a sect and the founder of a philosophical republic, who drew his mystical doctrines from Egypt, was called by his disciples the Son of God, and assumed miraculous gifts. Plato, on whose infant lips a swarm of bees lovingly clustered, was on similar testimony virgin-born; and even the grave, good Socrates had, as he asserted, his guardian demon. The old poets, who were also the historians and the prophets of early times, readily received the epithet "divine" from their supposed inspiration. It were easy to cite a multitude of like instances, showing that the human mind has never been satisfied with mere human authority, but has always demanded divine testimonies to moral doctrines.

If, as we have shown, the common belief of mankind has been always against the idea that barbarism was man's original condition, and that his progress has been toward refinement and religion, the books of the Scriptures contradict it even more positively. We see the two brothers near the gate of Eden, — one a tiller of the ground, the other a shepherd. The earliest work

recorded of Noah after the deluge was the planting of a vineyard. The circumcised patriarchs, because pilgrims without a country, were migratory herdsmen, while the farthest records show us Egypt eminent for its agricultural wealth, and ruled by shepherd-kings. In vain do we search for a barbarous people in those remote ages. Barbarism was of a later date. Adam, who conversed with God, his Creator, as a child with his father, must have learned from his infinite Teacher the great truths of religion, and cannot be supposed to have forgotten them in his fall, but must have taught them to his multiplying descendants till the close of his long term. Between him and the calling of Abraham, we see that there were needed only three — Methuselah, Noah, and Shem — to hand down the primeval doctrines.

Religion, therefore, was no discovery of reason, no gradual development. True religion was the original faith of men in the divine testimony. This is in accordance with the account given by the apostle Paul in the first chapter of the Romans, where he tells us: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they worshipped him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed

the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Here the apostle, of his inspired wisdom, declares that the nations had originally a knowledge of the true God; but unwilling to retain a sense of his holy spiritual majesty, yet unable to banish all thought of divinity, they turned their worship to senseless images of man and brutes, and even reptiles; and, therefore, God suffered them to lose his true idea, and in consequence the most deplorable immoralities took the place of that virtue which the worship of a spiritual God enforces. Idolatry was not the attempt of a barbarous mind to seek divinity, but the departure of civilized, instructed mind from God, and barbarism itself the fall of mankind from original civilization.

The theory of the Bible is corroborated by the facts of history.

We mark, however, more particularly that it was the spirituality of the divine nature which offended the corrupted heart of man. A spiritual Creator, infinitely above the passions and appetites of corporeal life, and the pure ruler over the creatures he had made, held them in fear and restraint from the sensualities they desired to enjoy; and, therefore, they exerted their wicked ingenuity to darken their hearts against spiritual holy light. They could not do without religion altogether; the evidences of divine power were too

strong, their dependence on power higher than their own, too manifest; the habit, grown almost instinctive, to pray and worship when calamities threatened or successes were doubtful, could not be repressed; and so they set up before their eyes symbolical images which they worshipped, not as they would have said had they been questioned, because they considered those senseless shapes to possess divine attributes, but because they suggested the ideas of God to their mind. It was the same error as that into which the Papist has fallen, who will tell you that he does not worship the crucifix he holds before him, but the Saviour whom the image brings eloquently to his remembrance. We have a striking illustration of this in the Israelites at the foot of Sinai; who, impatient of delay when the glorious sign of the divine presence, which had led them out of Egypt, rested long on the top of the mount, demanded of Aaron that he should make them gods which should go before them; and Aaron copied the Egyptian symbol of productive force, the agricultural ox, or, as our translators render it, a calf. That neither they nor Aaron considered the golden calf to be a conscious god, but only a symbol of divine power, is seen in the fact that Moses proclaimed a feast unto the LORD (Jehovah), the name of Israel's covenant God.

The purpose of idolatry being to get rid of a spiritual divinity, from which moral attributes, condemning their sensual vices, were inseparable, but to retain the physical power of divinity for their selfish purposes, they set up images symbolical of the forces visible in nature. In other respects than superhuman power, they made their gods animal and subject to animal passions like themselves, — nay, like the brutes. The

least acquaintance with heathen mythology proves the truth of Aristotle's saying, that "such as men wish the gods to be, so they make them." For the same reason not only did the imputed sensualities of the gods encourage similar impurities among their worshippers, but sensuality of the grossest character became prescribed parts of idolatrous worship; and not a few of their most observed festivals and ceremonies were most abominable imitations and representations of acts on the part of their gods of which, as the apostle Paul says in particular reference to them, it is a shame even to speak. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a history true to the letter of the Gentile idolatry.

They retained, as we have said, the idea of divine force — the motive power, if I may so speak — in their gods; and this is the key to the philosophy of idolatry; though in more ignorant nations, or where the corruption became most brutal, the traces of it are less distinct. Thus the first object of idolatrous worship was fire, or the great central fire, the sun. They were led first to this, no doubt, by the fact that God himself had made supernatural fire or flame or brightness, "glory," as it is termed by the sacred writers, the symbol of his presence. But they soon went farther; and as they saw the sun, by his active heat, calling forth the fertility of the earth, they learned to worship productive force in that glorious sign and medium of divine power. The earth, for the reason that she bears the fruit of the sun's genial influences, received the name of mother; and out of this marriage grew the widely extended worship of productive energy under masculine and feminine symbols, known as the Bacchic or

Phallic system, the main elements of which exist to this day in the idolatries of India, and spread themselves from Egypt over the ancient historical world. Of this most popular, because most sensual of all idolatries, it is not becoming for us to say more; but could we detail its nature and its mystic ceremonies as they were practised by the classical nations, as well as many less cultivated, down to as late a period as the sixth century after Christ, all would bear out the statement we have made.

In process of time this productive energy came to be divided among many new inferior gods who were, to the minds of the common people at least, the controllers of various departments in nature and art and intellectual exercise. The sea, the winds, the farm, poetry, wisdom, peace, war, all had their tutelary or peculiar deities, while each mountain, stream, and tree had its guardian nymphs.

The primeval faith had left traces on the traditionary conscience of mankind too deep to be eradicated, and accordingly we find a general acknowledgment that vice provoked the anger, and virtue had the approbation of the powers that rule human destinies. There are passages in the philosophical writings and the tragic poems containing sentiments and truths which approach in purity and sublimity the inspired Scriptures; but the philosopher painfully felt the lack of evidence on which to base a confident trust, and the strain of the highest poetry places retributive justice above the gods themselves, and even ruling them as by eternal fates. Every scholar is familiar with the mysterious destiny which, through all the tragic and heroic poems, is made to pursue with calamitous vengeance, yet as a

blind necessity, the perpetrators of greater crimes and their descendants. This does not, however, deny the fact that the aim of idolatry in transferring worship from a spiritual supreme to sensible, material objects, was to deprive divinity of moral attributes. They dreaded divine justice, and when conscious of guilt, sought to avert its wrath by sacrifices and purifications, but they never adored it as a venerable claim on their homage and trust. The prayer of the people never was for purity of heart and strength of virtue; in a word, there was no love of holiness in all their worship, no practical recognition of it in all their religion; and this, we repeat, was the reason why the morals of heathenism were so abominably depraved, their very gods, because of their own vices, becoming so low and contemptible as to be made the butt of satirists and farce-writers. Even while they persecuted to death teachers who, like Socrates, endeavored to restore the moral authority of heaven over the popular theogony, and while the altars of magnificent temples were deluged with the blood of hecatombs, amidst the smoke of the costliest perfumes, the audience in the theatre roared in laughter at the scurrilous jokes of Aristophanes or Plautus, who were never so witty or recklessly bold as when ridiculing the inhabitants of Olympus, from the father of gods and men down to sooty Vulcan.

The object of this discourse will have been gained, if its argument, for obvious reasons more brief than another occasion might allow, has served to show the immense practical importance of our Lord's divine doctrine: "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." There is in our natures, even when renewed, but as yet imperfectly

sanctified, a constant struggle between the spirit and the flesh, which prompts men to substitute external, visible forms for a spiritual religion. The tendency to such a corruption of worship is not peculiar to heathenism, so called, but has exerted its baneful sway under the name of Christianity, as the rites of the Papists, and those who imitate them, too plainly show; nor is it altogether absent from the strictest sects of Protestantism. It is the vice of our fallen nature against which we have all constantly to struggle, and shows itself in every attempt to have the form of godliness while we deny the power thereof. Religion, to be true, must be a spiritual worship of the infinite Spirit. His authority searching our inmost thoughts, his love ruling our moral affections, alone can control the practice of our lives. Hence a godly life is throughout the Scripture a spiritual life, and is begun, continued, consummated by the Spirit of God dwelling in and bearing witness with our spirits, thereby enabling us by a divine strength to resist and overcome the degrading tendencies of our carnal natures. Hence faith, the main instrument of the Holy Ghost for our sanctification, is a belief of God's moral truth, discerning things invisible and eternal. Such belief alone can make us closely acquainted with God, purge our souls from the grossness of sensualism, and overcome the world by the infinitely transcendent attractions of eternal fellowship with God. Hence the first commandment of the law demands of us faith in the absolute supremacy of the one only God; the second insists on an equal recognition of his spiritual essence, and forbids all practices springing from a desire to rid ourselves of the

moral restraints which his spiritual nature imposes upon all who fear and adore him. It is only in this broad light that we can see the full meaning of the second commandment and its true object in forbidding all idolatry.

LECTURE XLVI.

ON PROFANE SWEARING.

THIRTY-SIXTH LORD'S DAY.
ON PROFANE SWEARING.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." — EXODUS xx. 7.

IT were very painful to think that, among this vast crowd of intelligent and educated young men,* there could be found one who denied or even doubted the being of God. So deeply is the great Idea impressed upon human reason, so clearly is it announced to us by revelation, so fully is it demonstrated by the admirable economy of nature, so necessary is it to philosophical argument as the source of all law, so essential to social morals as the universal, supreme, only sufficient motive of virtue, that we regard an atheist as a monster, our pity for whose wretchedness is wellnigh swallowed up in disgust at his deformity. Yet, my friends, when we acknowledge, as we do, the existence of God, we confess that he is our God, our Creator; therefore, our Owner, our Ruler; therefore, our Judge. Let us suspend our officious denunciation of the atheist, and ask, What are we, if, believing in God, we live as though there were no God? if, while he speaks in his word, we deafen our ears to his voice, forget him amidst the countless miracles of his works, and, stifling his witness in our consciences, do as we list, careless of our duty and allegiance, disregardful alike of his smile or his frown, his eternal rewards or everlasting damnation.

* This lecture was one of a course of sermons, preached by the clergymen of New York and other cities, before the Young Men's Christian Association of New York.

But criminal as such neglect of God is, there is a sin yet more aggravated, an offence against his majesty far more heinous, more than contempt, a defiance of his almighty wrath, so common that the atmosphere of our land is loaded with its enormity; nor can we easily believe that there are none even in this most respectable audience stained by its guilt. It is a profane use of the divine names and sentences in ordinary conversation. No apology need be made for bringing a subject of such importance to your attention, since God himself has given it a place among the four great commandments which immediately respect his own honor. That commandment shall be our text:—

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”—EXODUS xx. 7.

We have here two things for our solemn consideration:—

FIRST: *What is meant by taking the name of the Lord our God in vain.*

SECONDLY: *The extreme wickedness of such profanity. “The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”*

FIRST: *What is meant by “taking the name of the Lord our God in vain”?*

By the name of the Lord God, according to the idiom of Scripture, is intended not merely the appellation of the Divine Being, but also his supreme authority and power. Thus: “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” The Saviour did his works in his “Father’s name”;

and by his direction we pray, “Hallowed be thy name.” The simple mention of the Deity should remind us of his claim upon our worship and obedience; yet the text goes farther, and enjoins a reverence not only for the supreme himself, but for all that bears the impress of his majesty: “Thou shalt not treat lightly the authority of the Lord thy God.” The prohibition is, therefore, very extensive, forbidding not only perjury, which is an appealing to the Great Searcher of hearts while uttering a lie, but also all irreverence whatsoever toward his names, titles, attributive epithets, sentences, words, and institutions.

As, however, it would be impossible at present to treat of the whole subject, our consideration will be of *profaneness in common conversation.*

By such profaneness is meant,

1. Light and impious protestations by any of the Divine names on trivial occasions. These are correctly termed *oaths* in every sense of that momentous word. The profane swearer may not reflect upon what he is saying; but, in fact, he is taking God to witness of what he utters. It is not the place or the occasion which makes an oath, but the assertion by the name of God. How awful the blasphemy of invoking the Most High on slight pretences, or of using his venerable titles without a solemn sense of their tremendous meaning!

2. The thoughtless mention of the divine name in idle or hasty exclamations, such as, “My God!” “O Lord!” “God bless me!” and the like. If there be any meaning in the use of such phrases, it is an invocation of the divine presence and favor, which cannot be our feeling unless we have some proper idea of his infinite character; and if we utter them without any

consideration of their import, we grossly insult him who is very jealous of his name.

3. An irreverent use of those words which are employed by God to denote his wrathful sentences, as damn, damnation, curse, hell. These and like words are so appropriated to the divine dispensations of his justice against transgressors of his law, that they are always, with a few inconsiderable exceptions, so understood. What a contempt does it argue of his avenging anger, when we invoke it petulantly or flippantly on our own heads; or cruelly and maliciously desire to make God the minister of our excited passions by invoking it on the heads of others!

4. A wanton use of scriptural texts or expressions by way of witticism or facetiousness. The language of Scripture is peculiar, and, at the same time, familiar to us, so that we readily recognize an imitation of it; and all the point of the miserable jest lies in the resemblance to the words of the Holy Ghost, for the closer the resemblance, the droller it is thought to be. This form of profaneness has too much prevalence, even among those who profess better and should know better; nor can it be sufficiently condemned, for how shocking should be a travesty of those sacred words in which we are accustomed to hear God speaking of mercy and judgment, or a parody of his most gracious teachings! No one can thus sport with holy words who has a respect for the authority of Scripture; nor are we able entirely to divest a text, which we have heard so abused, of the unworthy association. It may be said that no profanity is intended; but how can it be otherwise than profane to use the language of eternity in speaking of trifles, or to raise an idle laugh

at the expense of respect for the word of God? The Mohammedan, who will not tread upon written or printed letters lest he might trample on a saying of his prophet, may teach professed Christians a lesson; and, surely, he, who commanded Moses to put off his shoes from his feet as he stood before the burning bush, because the very ground was holy from the presence of the Lord, will avenge such an insulting approach to that holy word by which he reveals himself as a jealous God.

Having thus briefly defined profanity in common conversation, let us now consider,

SECONDLY: *Its extreme wickedness.* "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

1. It is an evidence of a heart deplorably insensible to the character of the Most High. It is the name of the Lord our God which is so profaned. It is a rule of human as well as divine wisdom, to give honor where honor is due. Respect to our superiors in lawful authority has ever been held necessary for the order of society. Filial reverence is the first lesson of filial duty. Our judges on the bench and our legislators in their halls are protected by privileges and addressed by titles, to which, as private persons, they have no claim. This deference is extended to all who are distinguished by age or wisdom or worth. A hoary head is a crown of honor in the eyes of all but the utterly abandoned. To treat with disrespect the counsels of the wise is to argue ourselves fools, and to speak lightly of the good is to prove ourselves depraved. How much more is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, entitled to our reverential and awful re-

spect! He is our Creator, who formed us out of dust, animated us with intelligent and immortal spirits, upholds and preserves us by his constant hand; our Ruler, whose authority is over all, and from whose dominion there is no escape; our Judge, by whose laws and sentences our eternal state is to be fixed, and from whose decision there is no appeal; the infinitely glorious Being, to the majesty of whose holy perfections there is no bound, — at the thought of whom the very devils tremble, — before whose brightness seraphim and cherubim veil their faces as they adore; whose throne is ever surrounded by innumerable hosts of prostrate worshippers, and to whom universal creation, except the blasphemer, is ever sending up hymns of praise, — yet it is his name that man, the worm of the dust, the creature of his hand, dependent upon him even for the air he breathes, profanes in the burst of anger, in peevish impatience, in wanton thoughtlessness, in the ribald jest. O what must be the depravity of his heart who can stand upon earth, from which God took him, and beneath the heavens which are telling God's glory, and in the midst of God's bountiful, beautiful works, yet use that tongue, which God taught speech, to blaspheme the holy, the just, and the good Author and Sovereign of all!

2. It is a direct insult to God. In other sins we rebel against the divine government; but in profaneness we defy God to his face, we rush before his terrible presence, we stand fronting his burning eye, and fling our challenge at the foot of his throne; we mock at his curse, we scorn his threatenings, we dare his fierce damnation, and deride his fiery vengeance. O when we hear him thus insulted, assailed, and defied,

we wonder that his lightning sleeps, that his red right hand, which flung the revolting angels down to hell, crushes not in sudden destruction the puny rebel, — that the shuddering earth does not swallow him up as it did the company of Korah, — that the caverns of the lost open not to receive so congenial a spirit among the blaspheming fiends; for who is more worthy of the tortures which the damned suffer than he who pollutes the name of God with his foul lips?

3. It is a sin against knowledge. In most other sins men may, at times, have doubts of their criminality. The profane swearer, if he knows the meaning of his words, cannot attempt such excuse. No one contends for the propriety of profaneness. No one defends it as necessary or pleasant. No one, who believes in God, can doubt its guilt. There is no need of study to detect, or of reasoning to prove its shamefulness. The command is too plain to be misunderstood: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" and conscience, however hardened, acknowledges that "the Lord" should "not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

In other sins we may forget that God is nigh; but the profane swearer, by the very terms of his oath, confesses that he is in God's presence, acknowledges his power and the reality of his fearful curses on the guilty; yet, in this spirit, he blasphemes. He sins wilfully, therefore foully; intelligently, therefore inexcusably; impudently, therefore desperately; and when the wrath of God kindles unquenchable fires around his lost spirit, in the agonies of his despair and remorse, his wailing cry will be, "I have got that for which I prayed. I taunted God to do his worst. I called

for damnation and hell, and they are here. With my own hand I have plucked ruin down on my head and murdered my soul!"

4. It is a sin without temptation. Every other sin has some lure, some promised pleasure, some momentary gratification, some hoped-for worldly profit. The sensualist indulges luxuriously strong-impelling appetites; avarice, fraud, and robbery aim at that wealth which purchases the things of this life; revenge has a malicious satisfaction in paying back wrong with wrong; falsehood seeks some end in deceiving, and the sophistry of the sceptic is an affected display of subtle acuteness, or of daring contrariety to established opinion. But profanity, especially common swearing and cursing, has no temptation to it except it be unmixed wickedness; it is a luxury to no sense, it brings a man no gain, it acquires for him no credit, nor is there anything in our natural constitution impelling us to it. A profane swearer displays no talent, but rather proves his lack of power to express himself in decent words. A half-witted fool, a drunken vagabond, a brazen harlot, a vagrant child, can swear as well as he. He talks the most arrant nonsense; he uses the most absurd phrases; he fills his mouth with words that mean only vileness. Profanity is the forlorn expedient of an empty head and a depraved heart, the last resort of blundering silliness, the incoherence of frenzied rage. Does a jest want point? It is sharpened by an oath. Is a story insipid? A curse is the ever-ready seasoning. Is an argument defective, or an opponent's contradiction strong? Blasphemy is an easy logic. Is an epithet wanting? The swearer needs no rhetoric to supply it; he has one ready for all occasions, — for hot

or cold, black or white, right or wrong, fair or ugly. Certainly, there is no intellectual temptation to this hateful, degrading habit. The swearer must acknowledge, that, were his words summed up, no one talks more aggregate absurdity; and that, however wise in other respects, for the time he is a parrot-like babbler, or a vociferous dunce. What should we think of a judge swearing on the bench, an advocate in his plea, a senator in his place? How should we regard an oath in a written treatise, or a formal speech? Is there any wit, reasoning, fancy, or beauty in it? Can it answer any purpose of instruction or delight? What motive can there be for profanity? It has nothing in it but a gross, stupid, devil-like contempt of all that good men love or deprecate. I have never heard any one defend it upon any principle; and the only excuse ever offered is, that it has become an unthinking habit; though some have owned themselves so lost to proper feeling that (to use their own expression) it did them good to swear when excited or irritated. "An unthinking habit!" The rapid growth and strength of such a habit is another proof of the enormous sin. "No one," says the Roman satirist, "ever became very wicked at once." So no one was ever naturally or without intentional practice a profane swearer. When he first attempted his awkward oath, he started and trembled lest the lightning of God would consume him on the spot, — his lips grew pale as he faltered out the fearful phrase; but soon, emboldened by the divine forbearance, callous from custom, and shameless through practised effrontery, he tosses from his leprous tongue oath after oath still more and more daring, until he scarcely knows when he swears, and his conversation

teems with insulting defiances of his Maker. "Unthinking habit!" "Unthinking!" Is it not the privilege and dignity of a man to think? Wretched swearer, is there naught that can serve to supply your dearth of words but the titles of your good and mighty God? Naught to swell your impoverished speech but the judgments that will ere long, except you repent, crush your soul in eternal anguish? "Habit!" Does habit excuse a thief, a liar, a debauchee? Has habit so corrupted your heart and your lips, rendered you so familiar with the dialect of the blackguard, the drunkard, and the damned, that you cannot choose but blaspheme like a lost spirit before your time? O surely, of all fools that mock at sin and at God who avenges himself on the sinner, the profane swearer is the silliest, cheapest, maddest, nearest to hell! So far from getting the world in exchange for his soul, the swearer asks for his gratuitous condemnation. Well has old Herbert said:—

"Lust and wine plead pleasure; avarice, gain;
But the cheap swearer, through his open sluice,
Lets his soul run for nought."

5. It is a very corrupting sin. There is, perhaps, no vice that corrupts the heart more than profanity. Fear of God, or a belief in his retributive justice, tends more than anything else to preserve men in a course of virtue. "The denunciations of divine vengeance," says the eloquent Roscoe, as quoted by the great penal jurist of Louisiana, "when duly impressed on the mind, possess a sanction at which mere human authority can never arrive, and bring with it that certainty which alone and in all circumstances can prevent the perpetration of crime." This opinion is corroborated by

universal experience. Those who bow with the most sincere reverence before God, are uniformly most strictly true in their dealings with men. But how is this restraint lost by the profane swearer! That very name, which should excite his awe, is prostituted to a base familiarity. He cannot fear God who does not hesitate to sport with His most solemn titles, nor can he have any just apprehension of a future punishment who makes it a jest and a by-word. The floodgate of all iniquity is thus raised. I firmly believe that a profane man is not to be trusted, and that no reliance can rightly be placed on his integrity, except so far as a regard for human laws and social opinion may restrain him. He can have no abiding sense of virtue. There is many a bad man who does not swear, there are many hypocrites in religion; but the profane swearer avows himself to be wicked, and we know that he is without the fear of God before his eyes; and, without the fear of God, he can have no conscience.

This effect must be peculiarly great upon formal oaths in courts of justice, or in the assumption of office. "Rash swearing," says an old writer, "leads to false swearing." It is impossible that one who trifles with the name of God upon all occasions should feel the solemnity of an appeal to him when the legal oath is tendered. Penal statutes against perjury may restrain him, but the sanctity of the oath will not. The best decisions set aside as unworthy of belief the testimony of those who do not understand the nature of an oath, or who deny a future state of rewards and punishments. But how much more credit does a profane swearer deserve? He may understand what an oath is, but does he reverence it? He may believe in God and the

judgment, but his conversation proves that he worships him not, for his anger is with him a matter of ordinary ridicule. Is the oath of such a man any better or as good as his word?

6. This is farther seen in the fact that profaneness is the ordinary accompaniment of great depravity. Hell is full of curses; and they who are fitting themselves by other crimes for the companionship of devils, prepare themselves by practice to join in the profanity of their destined prison-house. The gambler swears over his cards and sweating-cloth. The brothel echoes with obscenity and profanity in turn or commingled. The bar-room rings with maudlin or frenzied blasphemy. It is the last incoherent mutter of the bloated, houseless drunkard, as he rolls into the kennel. The cells of a prison are filled with the curses of felons. It is rare to find a notorious villain, from the sneaking pickpocket to the murderer on the highway, that is not notoriously profane. If he be not, it is because he is such an adept in crime that he artfully lays aside what his cunning tells him is a sign of guilt. So no man is ever profane without losing, in some degree, the respect of others, even of the profane themselves. Although we may have before admired his demeanor, giving him credit for dignity and propriety, the moment an oath drops from his lips, he sinks in our regard, — he loses the air of a Christian, the high polish of a gentleman, the calm truthfulness of a wise man. This sentiment is general. If any of my hearers doubt it, let him ask himself whether there is any profane person of his acquaintance whom he truly esteems as a thoroughly good man, or whom he would not respect more if he were not profane? If he looks not on a profane child

as precociously depraved, or shudders not as an old man, tottering on the brink of the grave, perseveres in cursing and swearing?

7. It corrupts others besides the profane person himself. President Dwight well remarks that profanity is a social vice. "A man seldom swears when alone." The swearer corrupts his companions, familiarizes them with that which at first shocked and disgusted them. He swears in his family, his children imitate his baleful example, — the little one, whom perhaps the mother would teach to pray, has the paternal sanction for its lisping oath, and grows up nurtured in sin, consigned by a parent's murderous tongue to depravity and ruin. These in their turn spread the contagion, until distant generations and far-off lands feel the corrupting leaven, and stain with the blood of countless souls the skirts of the blasphemer. The profane swearer is thus a moral blight, a walking pestilence, a reckless madman, scattering, even among those he loves best, arrows, firebrands, and eternal death. O swearer, if you will invoke the curse of the Almighty, step aside from the crowd, that it may consume you alone!

Lastly. It is a sin against which God has declared his especial vengeance. You may count it a trifling fault; but is that trifling which is followed by such mischief? God is the Judge by whom our sins are to be weighed; and throughout the Scriptures he declares himself to be a jealous God, especially jealous for the honor of his name. As the moral Governor of the universe, he is particularly incensed against a sin so corrupting, so calculated to shake all sense of his authority, and evincing such ungrateful impiety in return for his goodness and patience and readiness to forgive.

You may think his punishment of a few idle words will not be severe. But he sets the enormity of the sin and the penalty of the sinner beyond all doubt when he utters the commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." God will keep his word. Awful, therefore, must be the punishment of the profane swearer in the eternal world, except he repent. Hell is certainly his portion. It is the ruin he has invoked, ridiculed, and defied. He is fitted by his character and habits for no other. Heaven is a place of holy, reverent, and adoring praise; hell, the abode of rebellion, despair, and blasphemy. Even there, his punishment will be fearfully great. "I will pour out my fury," saith the Lord, "upon them that despise my statutes." How terrible the thought! The mercy of the Lord turned to fury! The fury of the Lord!—and, then, the bitter reflection, more tormenting than the fire that is not quenched, more envenomed than the worm that never dies, that it is the swearer's own wickedness turned in fierce retribution upon him!

Let me entreat you, my friend, to avoid profaneness. It is easily avoided, yet, easily acquired; and when acquired, with difficulty laid aside. It is a virulent vice, spreading like a leprosy through the whole moral constitution of a man; for you cannot learn to swear without ceasing to pray, without despising the check of conscience, without becoming worse in every respect; since profaneness concentrates, in a few brief phrases, unholy rancor, determined rebellion, and reckless abandonment of your soul. It will bring you neither gain, credit, nor honor. It introduces you to the vilest com-

panionship, and expels you from the society of the good as a self-branded Cain, the horror of all who fear God and practise virtue. It excludes you from the redemption of Christ, drives away the merciful Holy Ghost, and is the fore-doom of eternal perdition. Oh, swear not! For your mother's sake, swear not; for your friend's sake, swear not; for society's sake, swear not; for your own soul's sake, swear not; for the sake of God who made you, for the sake of Christ who died for you, swear not. It is easy to forbear, but oh, how desperately wicked to commit such a sin!

Have you been, are you now, in the habit of profaneness? Oh, lay it aside. You would be a gentleman, yet even the loose Chesterfield says a gentleman never swears; consider how you wound and shock the ears and hearts of all religious people, though they but catch the offensive sound as they pass you in the street. I ask, as a favor which courtesy can readily grant, that they may not hear you speak lightly of their best Friend, their beloved Father, their venerated Sovereign. But I plead more for your own sake and the sake of those whom your example may influence. How good and how patient has God thus far been to you in not cutting you off at your word! If he had done so, where were you now? He may do it yet. Have you not insulted his forbearance long enough? What has He done to provoke such insult, so gratuitous, so impudent? Oh, my friend, it is mean, it is dishonorable thus to treat your Benefactor because he is so long-suffering! Are you bent upon destroying your soul for the sake of uttering a vile word?

Do not say that you cannot break the habit. Your occasional restraint belies your assertion. You would

not swear before a lady, or a clergyman. A slight respect for another human being's feelings checks the oath upon your lips. Have you less respect for God? You would not swear if you knew that God would strike you dead; why defy him who maintains you in life? Resolve now that not one more oath shall pass your lips, and you will leave this sacred place a truer gentleman, a better man, and, I trust, to become a happy Christian.

LECTURE XLVII.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH.

THIRTY-EIGHTH LORD'S DAY.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made." — GENESIS ii. 2, 3.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." — EXODUS xx. 8-11.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." — MARK ii. 27, 28.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." — HEBREWS iv. 9-11.

IT was a principal, and the most fatal, error of the Jews, at the time of our Lord, that they expected the Messiah as a temporal prince, whose victorious prowess would establish them in the secure enjoyment of more than their former worldly advantages. Even the chosen disciples could not be persuaded that their Master's kingdom was not of this world, until the rejected and crucified of men had been received up into glory out of their sight. The error lay deeper than in a mistaken rendering of prophecy: it is radical in fallen, human nature, which, because the flesh has the mastery over the spirit, clings to earth instead of aspiring to

heaven. For this reason, all the teachings of our Lord and his apostles are after the pattern of that great evangelical command with its promise: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (those necessary for this present life) shall be added unto you." The eternal kingdom of God, with that righteousness by which alone we can attain it, is to be the first, the paramount, the constant object of our pursuit, while we trust contentedly in God to give us all of this world that he deems good for us as religious pilgrims, whose home and hearts are above, where Christ, our example and forerunner, sits at the right hand of the Father. But to use religion and its instrumental economy first for the enhancement of our worldly profit, is to make Christ the servant of our sensual idolatries after the fashion of those who, "destitute of the truth, suppose that gain is godliness." It is true, and we bless God for it, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come;" but it has promise of the life that now is, not as worldly men regard that life, and only as those estimate it whose treasure is in heaven. It is a lying promise of the devil, "the prince of this world," which says: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The declaration of him "who came from God and," having "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," "went to God," is: "In this world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The error of the Jews is rife among us. The Christian doctrine of Providence has taken a strong hold on men's outer convictions, while their hearts are insensi-

ble to "the power of an endless life"; and there is more than ever manifest a desire to serve God whom they dread, and Mammon whom they love, at the same time and by the same acts. Even Christians, eager to gain for religion the favor of the world, too often employ the jesuistry of holding forth, as a bribe, its worldly benefits. The true process of Christianity is to cut the root of human evils by converting the sinful heart through the faith of Christ; yet we waste great zeal in fertile attempts to lop off the branching vices. The genuine blessings of Christianity are fruits of the Spirit; and vain are all efforts to graft them upon the carnal will which is planted in the earth. Mere moral reforms, or schemes to create an outward shape, a counterfeit semblance of Christian virtue, draw away no small share of our strength from the spread of that gospel which is "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation,"—salvation here, because it is salvation hereafter,—salvation from the power as well as from the punishment of sin. The regenerating doctrine of the cross, against which men stumble, is not seldom thrust into a corner of the pulpit by professed preachers of our religion, while its temperance, its social purity, its political value, or its liberating tendencies are heralded, as though heaven was to be in this world, and eternity of less consideration than time, or our duty to God rendered only when our wages are in our hand. The holy Sabbath, God's own day, the blessing of our spiritual nature, the earnest of our immortality, the type of eternal satisfaction, has not escaped this ill-ordered logic. Christian tongues grow proudly eloquent upon its temporal excellence, summoning all philosophy to prove the physical benefits

of the mere rest from toil, without, and apart from its sacredness, as recommendations of its observance to the servant of the world. These arguments, very valuable when supplementary and subordinate, have been set in such undue prominence as to check our wonder, when men, perverting the Scripture that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," claim its sacred hours as their own, in which they may comfort themselves after the week's labor with a day of idle pleasure, to the neglect of his worship who set it apart for that holy end. Let us, at this time, elevate ourselves to a higher range of thought, and urge the authority of the Sabbath from those principles upon which it is founded in the word of God. The main drift of our discourse will, therefore, be to consider THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH; for, that being ascertained, it is easy to infer how the Sabbath should be kept.

The simple fact that God has solemnly enjoined upon us a devout observance of the Sabbath, were enough to demonstrate that it is our duty and our interest, even if we were unable to discover any of the reasons for which the Sabbath was ordained. God, our Creator and Sovereign, has a supreme right to direct and control us in the use of our time; as our kind and wise Father, who loves his human children and perfectly understands our nature, would give us no directions but such as must certainly tend to the best welfare of all who obey him. The Sabbath, therefore, cannot be otherwise than a most just and beneficial arrangement: just, as regards our obligations to God, — beneficial, as regards our own happiness.

But the circumstances in which God was pleased to

set apart the Sabbath, and his subsequent revelations concerning it, greatly enhanced its claims.

I. In the fourth commandment given on Sinai, God speaks of the Sabbath as already known, and its observance as already most solemnly enjoined, — "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;*" — and he carries us back to its institution on the seventh day from the beginning of the world. Referring to the sacred narrative, we learn that on the sixth day, after God had completed the inferior creation, he made man; "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them;" and, having commanded them to be "fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," he gave them dominion over all his terrestrial works. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good." . . . "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

Here we note several most important facts: —

1. The Sabbath is coeval with creation, antecedent to Christianity, to Judaism, and even to sin, which required the salvation promised at the gate of Eden. There were, therefore, reasons for the Sabbath in the fundamental relations between God and man, and in the original, not merely the acquired, necessities of human nature.

2. The Sabbath is *holy*. To hallow, to make holy, and to sanctify, are, as we all know, synonymous scriptural expressions, signifying to set apart for God. God

himself hallowed the Sabbath to himself. He made it, claimed it, sealed it, as his own. The primary reason why he sanctified it, was because "He rested on the seventh day from all his works." Hence the commandment declares that "the seventh day is *the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*," and, throughout the Scriptures, God calls the Sabbath *his Sabbath*. The entire eternity of God is holy, and with him, strictly speaking, there is no succession of time; therefore he did not set apart the Sabbath for his own use. The life of the blessed angels is a perpetual Sabbath; therefore the seventh day had no reference to them. God hallowed it, because on that day he rested from the creation of which he made man the delegated head; therefore its sanctification was enjoined upon man. All the time of man belongs to God, and at all times man is to render God service. But there are duties which man is to render God mediately, — that is, through the creatures of God with whom he is put in relation by his Creator, as the social and personal virtues called for by his moral circumstances; and there are duties which he is to render God immediately, as adoration, praise, and worship. So at the very beginning of man's life, and after God had assigned him his mediate duties, the Creator hallowed every seventh day of man's time as especially, peculiarly, immediately, and only the Lord's. In the six days he was to do all his work; but the seventh he was to set apart for the worship of his Maker and Sovereign, in which he should commemorate the creation gratefully, acknowledging the author of his being, the giver of all good, as his owner, his master, and his judge. "Hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a *sign* between me and you, that ye may know that I am

the Lord your God." The Sabbath, therefore, though made for man, is not man's, but the Lord's.

3. The Sabbath was *blessed*. The Sabbath, being mere time, is incapable of receiving blessing, and its blessedness must mean its being an occasion on which, and an institution through which, special blessings are conferred. Thus the Scriptures speak of "a field which the Lord hath blessed," signifying that the Lord had made it abundantly fruitful. The Sabbath is the Lord's, but it is made for man, that in keeping it aright he may, according to the benevolent purpose and wise economy of God, enjoy in the Sabbath, on the Sabbath, and from the Sabbath, peculiarly rich and abounding blessings. God ever dispenses his blessings to us through our use of appointed means, and the Sabbath was a special means in his use of which man, even before his sin, was blessed of God. The holy character of the Sabbath, its purpose, and the manner in which it is to be kept, distinctly show the nature of its blessings. The seventh-day rest from labor is, indeed, itself a blessing, fruitful of countless temporal blessings; but these are rather contingent and incidental. Abstinence from labor is enjoined in order to the keeping of the Sabbath separate for its peculiar purpose, the worship of God; and that being the special purpose of the Sabbath, its peculiar blessings spring from the worship of God within its sacred hours. The six days are appointed for man's labor in the world, connected, it is true, as all the affairs of this life are, with his higher, religious well-being; the Sabbath is set apart for the culture of his higher, religious interests, connected, as they manifestly are, with his best temporal welfare. A blessing of God is upon the labors of his true servants throughout the six

days; but the Sabbath sheds from God its appropriate blessings on man's worship of God. There are spiritual blessings connected with man's (so-called) secular work, because that work is duty to God; but those blessings are rather incidental, not peculiar. There are secular blessings connected with man's holy use of the Sabbath, for it is closely related to his secular time; but they are rather incidental, not peculiar. The blessing on the week may overflow into the Sabbath; the blessing on the Sabbath may overflow into the week: but the week and the Sabbath has each its blessing proper to itself. Man is dependent upon God for the supply of his wants as a dweller in this world; he is dependent upon God for the supply of his wants as a spiritual, religious, and immortal being. So far, then, as his spiritual are distinguishable from his physical interests, his religious from his secular, his immortal from his temporal, the blessings of the Sabbath are distinguishable from those of the week. The one regards him as separated from the affairs of this life, and in close communion with God; the other as still in communion with God, but busy amidst the affairs of this life. Therefore we infer that the Sabbath was made for man as a spiritual, religious, and immortal creature; so the Sabbath has no promise of blessing except when so used.

Such is the pressure of temporal cares, temptations, and distractions, that, were man left to its unrelieved, uninterrupted force, he would inevitably become forgetful of his higher welfare, and "quite lose the divine quality of his first being," forgetful of God in occupation with God's creatures, forgetful of his soul in attention to his body, forgetful of eternity in his anxiety for time.

So God, while he insists upon our constant religion, has set apart the Sabbath for the direct worship of himself, that during its hallowed rest man might meditate upon his Creator and the great purposes of his creation. The Sabbath is thus an endowment of the soul, an ordinance of religion, an earnest of immortality. There can be, after the gospel, no blessing so high as that of the Sabbath, no privilege so great as that which it affords, no dignity so noble as that to which it introduces us. It is, therefore, a most illogical mistake, as well as a grave sacrilege, to make the Sabbath a mere temporal convenience, or to expect a genuine blessing from it when not used for spiritual profit.

This consideration is heightened by the fact, that

4. The Sabbath was *introduced by the example of God.*

God needed no rest, yet he rested on the seventh day. It was for man that he thus consecrated the Sabbath by his divine conduct as well as command. God rested like man, that man might rest like God. Man was made in the image of God; therefore, as he was a "partaker of the divine nature," was he made to partake of the divine blessedness, and God shared with him his rest. Man was constituted the representative vicegerent of God over the mundane creation; therefore the Sabbath was set apart, that he might enter into close fellowship and council with God, the supreme Lord. Man was God's own dear child; therefore God on the Sabbath calls him up to rest on his Father's bosom, to enjoy a festival in his Father's house, and to receive an earnest, as the heir, of his Father's kingdom. Nowhere, except in God's taking upon him human nature, is there such an assurance that man may be-

come like his God as the Sabbath. The rest is, therefore, spiritual; for "the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary"; his rest was not because of fatigue from his work; neither is rest from labor the peculiar rest of the Sabbath. As man has a double nature,—a material frame as well as a spiritual soul,—rest may have been needful for his body even before his sin, and certainly is necessary now that death has passed upon him; but such rest is not the rest into which he enters with God: it is, at the best, only supplementary and auxiliary to the rest of his spirit. So it follows that only by a godly use of the Sabbath, in imitation of God and fellowship with him, do we secure its end and attain its blessings. It is then, and then only, a reimpression of God's likeness, a reconferring of God's authority, a reconfirmation of his sonship to the Father, a reinforcement of his title to immortal life.

5. The Sabbath *was laid at the foundation of human morals*. God ordained it in the very beginning of man's relations and responsibilities. He did not allow man to exist a whole day, or to enter fairly upon his various offices, before he had kept a Sabbath with his God; so important to man did the Creator and Law-giver consider that sacred day, as a *preparation* for his discharge of his relative duties. The reasons for this are obvious.

The duties of man to himself, to his fellows, and to the inferior creatures result from and are included by his duty to God. The law of God is the sole rule that determines, orders, and appoints the manner in which his virtues are to be exercised. He owes no duty to the creatures of God, nor any allegiance to human law

or authority, except as such duty has been enjoined upon him by God, and such allegiance has been directed by the divine precepts. An observation of the Sabbath, therefore, is appointed as an acknowledgment that all his time belongs to God, and that God alone has a right to direct him in the use of his time. It is like the offering of the first-fruits, in token that the whole harvest belongs to God, though the divine proprietor graciously permits the faithful husbandman to reap its blessings for himself. The fear and love and knowledge of God are necessary to establish and maintain in man's heart a right sense of his responsibility for all his conduct, and to cultivate a kindness of spirit and love of virtue by a contemplation of his divine pattern. He cannot regard his fellow-men as his brothers, except as he regards God as his and their Father; nor can he be sensible of the duties which he owes to the inferior creatures, except as he considers them belonging to God, his Creator and theirs. He cannot exercise his delegated authority aright, except in humble conformity to the example of the great Supreme. Therefore God has appointed the Sabbath for man, in which he is commanded to worship the Creator and Sovereign, to muse on the power and wisdom and goodness which have given him and all things being, to acquaint himself with the divine will, and to study, with adoring docility, the character of God in the structure of his works, the economy of his providence, and the revelations of his truth. Every well-kept Sabbath is thus a fresh return of man to God for instruction and strength to discharge his duty; and also a repeated anticipation of his rendering an account at the great day of the manner in which he has discharged his duty.

All the binding force that religion has over morals, is thus concentrated and made immediately applicable in a right use of the Sabbath. Not to remember the Sabbath, is not to remember God; and to forget God, is to forget the obligations of virtue. In this high sense has the Sabbath been made for man. As his happiness is inseparable from virtue, and virtue inseparable from religion, the Sabbath, on which both are specially cultivated, is a confirmation and security of man's highest good. Hence (we may observe in passing) experience has proved that where the Sabbath has been best kept, sound notions of morality, and the practice of virtue, personal and social, have most prevailed, because there the fear and love of God are the paramount motives of men's conduct. He only who remembers the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, will remember to keep himself holy; for the Sabbath is not only a means of moral strength, but also a test of moral sincerity.

Such, beloved brethren, is the doctrine of the holy Sabbath, as taught by God in the beginning, when he sanctified it for his own honor, and blessed it for the good of man.

When the almighty, all-wise, and all-bountiful Creator had finished his divine works, and had crowned man, the chiefest of them all, the head of our humanity, with radiations of his own glory and honor, we are told his infinite bosom glowed with especial satisfaction and delight. What, then, must have been the adoring, admiring, grateful transports of the holy creature man, whose sudden being was made illustrious with such majesty amidst such scenes of grandeur and loveliness! Perfect as were his pure frame and innocent spirit, the wonders and occupations crowded into the first day of

his existence rendered a day of rest welcome, if not necessary. He needed its sacred hours to consider his novel and eminent position; to confer with his Parent-Sovereign; to offer him solemn homage and glad thanks; to receive the sympathy of his Original, of whose infinite wisdom and authority and love and will he was the finite image. When, therefore, after the sleep of a night had composed his powers, overwhelmed though not worn by excess of rapture, he woke to look again upon his fair and magnificent kingdom, his Creator's creation and his Father's gift,—when through the rising odorous mists of fertile Eden he saw the morning sun, like a benediction from the burning throne, shine streaming down on forests and fields and waters, and on the countless tribes of air and land and sea, all active, fearless, and happy in their fresh life, and he lifted up his heart and voice to the invisible Lord whom he loved,—the sanctity of the Godhead's Presence was bowed with the glory of heaven to enshrine the unpolluted earth, Father and child rested in “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.” Then was “the Sabbath made for man”; then did he “enter into the joy of his Lord”; then did he drink of the rivers of the divine pleasures; then did he glow with filial satisfactions in the reflecting of his Father's glory, and exult in the privilege of ruling all for his Father's praise.

But there shall dawn another Sabbath, a Sabbath made for man, far exceeding its beautiful type in glory, praise, and sacred rest.

This leads us to consider, as we proposed,

II. *The subsequent revelations of the Divine Word concerning the Sabbath.*

If the Sabbath was necessary for man innocent, when his body was immortal and his spirit holy, much more must it be so for man fallen, since sin has planted thorns and briers in the ground, cursed for his sake, and he eats his bread in the sweat of his face; and his heart has become prone to forget God, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" and with all the grace of the gospel his whole life is required to prepare for his eternal future? But God, who is rich in mercy, did not forget his sinful children, nor take from them the Sabbath blessing. The promise of salvation was given at the very gate of Eden, and so we have sufficient reason to believe that the Sabbath was kept by the true worshippers of God until the giving of the law by Moses; for the fourth commandment bade them "*remember* the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and for the same reason assigned as at the beginning, clearly assuming that its sanctification had been always known and enjoined. That the Sabbath was known and recognized as a divine institution, is put beyond doubt by what we read in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, 22-29, where, after the giving of the manna, with the command to gather on the sixth day the portion necessary for the seventh, Moses said: ". . . To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it

there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place: let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." Here the Sabbath is spoken of as known to be one of God's commandments and laws, and that, because it was so, God required them to refrain even from gathering manna, at the same time taking from them all temptation to disobey. It was commanded to the Israelites, not as a peculiar people merely, but as men and creatures of God, whose God, notwithstanding their sins, he declared himself to be. It was no part of the ceremonial law, separately given afterwards to them as the circumcised nation; but is fixed permanently in that moral code, every precept of which is binding upon all men, because, as we have seen, the Sabbath lies at the very foundation of sound morals.

Yet it must be noted, that, for another and special reason, its observation is enforced upon the Jewish people: "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day" (Deut. v. 15). On the Sabbath-day they were to remember God their Creator, because they were men, but also to remember him as their deliverer, because they were Israelites; and to meditate thankfully on his attributes displayed in crea-

tion, and on his attributes combined in the mercy that effected their transfer from the wretchedness of Egypt to the inheritance of the promised land. So, throughout the Old Testament it is declared, that by their sanctification of the Sabbath, as a covenant sign, they were to know the Lord as indeed their God; and from it, as a means, every blessing, spiritual and temporal, was to come upon them.

But, my brethren, as you well know, the covenant of God with the Abrahamic nation was typical of his covenant with his true Israel, their deliverance out of Egypt; of that Israel's redemption from sin with all its consequences, and their establishment in Canaan; of the rest remaining in eternity to the people of God. Therefore do we, as Christians, keep holy the Sabbath-day, that we may glorify God our Redeemer, meditate upon the greatness of his gracious power in accomplishing the atonement through which we live, and anticipate in lively hope our full salvation in the rest above.

Nay, we fetch our warrant for this evangelical use of the Sabbath from a great type at the beginning, for the redemption by Christ is the more glorious antitype of creation itself. The redemption of the church is emphatically styled "a new creation," and the believer "a new creature," "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," his new life breathed into him by the Holy Spirit; and as man was made in "the likeness of God," so the new man is renewed in "knowledge," "righteousness and true holiness after the image of him that created him." The first Adam was the head of his race, and was owned as the Son of God. So is the IMMANUEL constituted the Head of his church, the sec-

ond Adam of a spiritual seed, all of whom by him are children of God. Adam was made lord over earth, so the second Adam is "head over all things to his church," and his people are all "kings unto God," for they are of the seed-royal. The very name of man's original happy dwelling-place is given to that home of delight where the church shall be complete in bliss eternal, for Paradise is the exact translation of Eden, the garden of the Lord; and thither has the second Adam, our Forerunner, our Elder Brother, for us entered, and sits crowned with glory and honor, the representative of man again made perfect. Therefore we keep the Christian Sabbath, and, according to apostolical example, on the first day of the week, because that was the first day after the new creation by the finished atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross, — the day on which he rested, and blessed his people, after all his work, as the Redeemer. This involves no change of the Sabbath's nature: it is still a seventh day, — a day holy to the Lord, — a day of rest; but it adds to the motive of honoring God the Creator, the one still higher and more precious to the Christian, of honoring God the Saviour, and to the commemoration of God's work in the beginning, the anticipation of his final glory in the perfectness of his church on high. We are justified in the change, for God the Creator hath given all power in heaven and earth to God incarnate, as the Saviour, "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath-day," and the first day of the week is the Lord's day, in which we honor the Son even as we honor the Father. Thus, my brethren, the voice of God our Creator speaks to us from the beginning of human existence, commanding us to hallow the Sab-

bath for his glory and our own good; and God the Saviour, standing beside his broken tomb, repeats the injunction, with all the arguments of his devoted love. He, who on the first Sabbath blessed man by admitting him to communion with himself, on the day after the second creation came into the midst of his chosen, saying, "Peace be unto you," and "breathed upon them the Holy Ghost." All the mighty wonders of the past, all the greater wonders of the eternal future, crowd around the sacred day. It is beautiful with the light that shone on happy Eden, illustrious with the glory of rejoicing heaven. As its fresh morning breaks upon our souls, we seem to hear the morning stars singing together, and all the sons of God shouting for joy; then, mingling with their chorus, "like the voice of many waters," the hallelujahs of the church of the first-born around "the throne of the Lamb that was slain." The primal Sabbath bowed heaven down to earth; the Christian Sabbath lifts earth up to heaven. The first Sabbath crowned the blessings of creation; the second Sabbath crowns the blessings of redemption. The original Sabbath reminded man of his creation; ours assures him that he is immortal. The one called innocent man from his pleasant work to the higher delight of communion with God his Maker; the other offers us, in our sinful weakness, a refuge from the toils of a tempting world, that we may, while yet on earth, anticipate eternal rest above in communion with God our Saviour. How foully, then, do we profane the divine ordinance, how completely pervert it from its holy purpose, when we abuse the privilege of its release from secular cares into a license for ungodly idleness!

There is another idea belonging to the Sabbath, taught in the last of the texts which we chose for the scriptural foundation of our argument. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, hath ceased from his own works as God did from his. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." Here is an assurance, drawn from the previous argument of the inspired writer, that the people of God shall have an eternal rest. Then the character of that rest is given, inasmuch as the people of God rest from their works as God did from his. And a practical inference is stated in the form of an exhortation that we should labor in order to attain the eternal rest.

Man, at the first, was created a child of God in his own right, and had he been faithful to the covenant, which made a continuance of the divine favor contingent upon his obedience, all his posterity would have been the people of God. Formed as a finite likeness of the infinite God, the employment assigned him was as much like that of God as a creature's could resemble the Creator's. He could originate nothing: that is the prerogative of the Supreme; but he could employ the creatures of God, inferior to himself, for the same end as that for which God had made them, the Creator's glory; therefore did he receive from God a viceroyal authority and control over all the inferior creation. "Thou hast put," saith the Psalmist, "all things under his feet." Hence, as God rested from his works as the Creator, it was necessary to carry out man's resemblance of God, that he also should have a rest from his peculiar works. Therefore was the Sabbath appointed that he might rest with God, and only in proportion,

but certainly in proportion as his works resembled in holy zeal and purpose the works of God, was he prepared for sympathy with the rest of God.

Man fell, and with all his posterity lost the divine image; and no more are we, by our own natural right, the people of God, nor are we entitled to the Sabbath-rest, or fitted for its enjoyment, since the original sympathy between God and man is destroyed.

The mercy of God in the redemption has repaired for all believers the breach of the apostasy. Regenerated man again resembles God as to his nature, employment, and rest. He takes the same place in the new creation as that which he held and lost in the first; but so much more gloriously and securely as the second creation excels the former. The second covenant (commonly called the covenant of grace) is, in effect, a continuance of the first covenant (commonly called the covenant of works), for life is still given on condition of obedience. The Son of God, made flesh for the performance of human duties and the endurance of human suffering, comes, according to divine appointment, as the second Adam, in the station vacated by the first. The covenant is renewed with him, acting on behalf of believers, who are called by the prophet Isaiah "his seed." The reward of the first covenant was of mere man's obedience, therefore finite, and, for the same reason, perishable; but the new life under the gospel is the reward of Christ, the IMMANUEL's infinitely meritorious righteousness, therefore is it incomparably glorious and infallibly eternal. Earth is too narrow, time too short, to contain it; therefore is its scene transferred to an everlasting heaven. So, also, is the image of God renewed immortally and far more

illustriously in the believer's soul, because he derives it from his personal union to the only-begotten Son of God, his Elder Brother, and it is perpetually maintained by the ever-living Spirit of God dwelling in him. Thus are all believers united and owned and blessed in Christ as the people of God; and eventually the whole church will be glorified with Christ in God, throughout the rest eternal.

But the new creation, like the first, is gradual, not instantaneous. It is, for wise reasons, (some of which are known and might be given had we the time,) progressive, both as respects the individual believer and the church. This creation Christ, on the part of God, being the representative of the Godhead, is carrying on by his almighty power; and, on the part of his church, being the representative of his people, by his delegated authority as the second Adam, "under whose feet are put all things." Again; in Christ, according to the true sense of his scriptural title, "the First-born of every creature," is regenerated man made heir and lord of all things, which he is bound to use for the glory of the Creator. He takes the same place in the new creation that he held in the first. God, by Christ, employs his instrumentality for the furtherance of his grand purpose. God put man in Eden, to keep it and to dress it; but he assigns to the Christian a far more noble and ennobling employment. By our prayers, our obedience, our example, and our zeal, he condescends to convert sinners and edify believers in their sanctifying faith. The Christian is a worker together with God. "God worketh in him both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." The new creation is yet going on. Soon it will be accomplished, and the

almighty Saviour rest from his work. Jesus finished his personal work on earth, and entered into his rest as the Forerunner of his people. Each believer, as he finishes his work on earth, follows his Master and rests from his labors as Christ did from his. But though the work of Christ to be accomplished on earth was finished in his death, his providential work, a great part of which he performs by the agency of his people, will not be perfected until the church be complete in glory. Until then, the church must labor. When it is accomplished, Christ and his people will rest together. God shall again behold all that it is very good, and that Sabbath dawn whose sun shall no more go down. Then shall they who have shared in the work, share in the joy of their Lord. As he beholds with infinite complacency the results of his efficient grace, "the mighty working by which he is now subduing all things to himself," they shall sympathize with his satisfaction as the honored instruments of his power. The triumphs of the Redeemer will be their triumphs, and, while they give him all the glory, they will share his reward. Every good act done, every good word spoken, every good purpose cherished and prayed for, every sinner they have brought to Christ, every Christian they have assisted on his way to heaven, will give them a deeper fellowship with him who shall have redeemed all, converted all, sanctified all, and glorified all. As the divine Father looks over heaven filled with immortal trophies of his mercy, and the divine Son "sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied," and the divine Spirit sheds light and peace and love through all the spirits he has made perfect, the faithful Christian shall drink abundantly of the rivers of the divine pleas-

ure, for "he shall rest from his own works as God doth from his." What an argument and encouragement for us to labor that we may enter into that rest in which the ungodly and the slothful can have no part.

The Sabbaths of the church on earth are so many successive stations, from whose Pisgah-like eminences we may look back on the work we have done, and forward to the reward of glory promised. Only as we are faithful fellow-workers with Christ can we enter into the eternal rest of heaven; so, only as we work for Christ, are we prepared and entitled to enjoy the rest of the Sabbath. The rest of heaven is holy in communion with God; so only may we keep the Sabbath on earth. The Sabbath now, "having," like the old law, "a shadow of good things to come," is not a perfect rest, because it is but a day, and, being followed by a secular week, must be used as a preparation for work before us: the rest of heaven is complete; its "sun shall no more go down"; the people of God shall no more go out into temptation and toil; they rest from all their labors, and their faithful works do follow them.

Thus we have the clear and consonant testimony of all Scripture to the divine purpose of the Sabbath,—that it is a purely religious ordinance, for the glory of God in the adoring worship of man, and for the spiritual benefit of man, in its sanctifying power over his life on earth, and, therefore, his preparation to enter an immortal blessedness beyond the grave.

From the whole subject a multitude of important practical inferences might be drawn. We have time but for a few of the most comprehensive.

FIRST: *Caution in arguing the value of the Sabbath from its mere temporal benefits.*

As a rest from toil, a day on which the weary bearer may lay aside the burden from his aching shoulders; the laborer look up, wash from his face the dusty sweat, and stand erect the equal of his master by the proclamation of God; and even the patient beasts, that all the week have slaved for man's convenience or luxury, may be free from the yoke; as a glad festival, during whose emancipated hours the thought of work is an injury and a profanation, the Sabbath is beautiful. The ingenuity of man has discovered nothing so beautiful. Neither may we doubt that its periodical repose, when legitimately accepted, especially with the cleanliness it suggests, is necessary for the repair of animal energy and mental vigor; or that work on the Sabbath is in the main not only a hindrance but a loss. It is the poor man's property, the rich man's benefit, the dumb brute's right, and a luxury for all; a golden link brightening at brief intervals the chain of our iron days, the happy memento of the primal age when no curse had blighted our earth's spontaneous fertility. Yet should we never, even by implication, allow the thought already too common, that the Sabbath, though made for man, is not the Lord's but man's to dispose of as he lists; a convenience granted, which he may use or not, as he chooses, instead of an ordinance, the sanction of which he is bound to obey; a prescribed grace to his soul rather than to his body, and to his body as the unconscious servant of his spirit. By such a line of argument we move the question of its observance from under divine authority, and make it one of industrial economies, which outwork themselves most health-

fully when least constrained by artificial rules, or those not imposed upon them unalterably by the Author of providence.

Besides, the absence of necessity for work, mere leisure, simple idleness, so far from being by itself, even rarely, a blessing, is rather, as all experience shows, a provocation to sensual indulgence and wasteful crime, especially among the ignorant and toilworn, who have few luxuries within their reach, and less opportunity to enjoy them. We cannot be awake and be wholly inactive. Our compound nature is never safe, except when moral knowledge and moral principle strengthen the spirit to master the flesh. This is the great virtue of the Sabbath. Because on that day, and that day alone, the schools of religion and morality are open to all, and all have leisure to attend them, the Sabbath is a blessing to a truly Christian people. When it is not so observed, it becomes a curse, especially for those who need its physical rest the most. There has been much finely said by superficial, though well-meaning philanthropists, and even some excellent Christians, as to the unmercifulness of shutting up the hard-worked poor, particularly of crowded cities, within the walls of churches or their own homes on the day of rest, when they should be free to walk abroad, or avail themselves of steamboat and railroad that they may enjoy the fresh works of God, or wile away the pleasant hours with innocent pastimes. But, saying little of the injustice to the many who are made, by such practices, greater slaves on the Sabbath than on any other day for the convenience of the rest, we are clear in believing that the Sabbath-keeping, church-going poor have the best enjoyment of its sacred hours, and go freshest, cheer-

fullest, happiest to their work on the Monday morning. That keenly satirical moralist, Hogarth, has well set this forth in his contrasted pictures of Sunday Morning and Sunday Evening, where the reeling father, the flushed, bedraggled wife, and the tired, blubbered child, who had gone out together for a day's pleasure, tell the miserable story of a broken Sabbath. What must be their Monday morning, with its empty purse, its aching heads, and surly remorse! A poor Christian family has spent the day in thankful peace; gone in their clean, though humble raiment to the house of God, joined in the sacred harmony, — to them a richer treat than the most artistic concert to our fastidious ears, — listened to the elevating gospel, emphatically theirs, because preached first to them by the carpenter of Nazareth, and, after the sanctity of household devotion, laid themselves down to unfevered sleep. They shall awake in the morning rested and strong, vigorous from a sense of duty, cheered by divine sympathy, and reconciled to all life's trying urgencies by the hope of a Sabbath sinless and eternal. If the laborer must have a holiday, — and I, for one, would be far from refusing it, — let him take it from the six; but oh! encourage him not to trample upon the Sabbath, the memorial of Eden, the prelibation of Heaven! Press, also, close upon the consciences of those who force or bribe their fellow-servants to toil during the sacred rest, not only their cruel robbery of the poor man's right, scanty enough at the best, but still more earnestly their wrong of society in depriving him of moral culture, their outrage upon his heart in shutting up his access to God, and their murder of his soul in tempting him to sin, and the neglect of the best means for attaining everlasting rest.

SECONDLY: *Reliance upon the truth and Spirit of God only, for the vindication and enforcement of this ordinance of God.*

The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath; but his kingdom is not of this world. Every bond by which, in our impatience, we would unite religion to secular power, is hurtful. The world will use the church for its own purposes, but never keep its part of the unjustifiable covenant. Something may seem to be due us on the score of protection in our rights as Christian citizens, but Christians should be chary of enforcing their rights. We are the few among the many; and the time-servers who deprecated our favor before we drew out our line of battle, will laugh us to scorn when they see our weakness. Our moral influence, by the blessing of God upon the authorized means, is great, but the moment we fight with carnal weapons we shall be put to the worst. The devil and his allies are impregnable on his own ground; we can destroy his defences only from the superior heights of truth and love.

The Sabbath, with its ordinances, has by divine grace the inherent power to establish itself. By its moral teachings, its faithful warnings, and hope-inspiring promises drawn from the almighty word of God, it can draw men to worship around the cross which it uplifts, when force can make but reluctant hypocrites or profane idlers. The gospel, the pure gospel, the gospel in its light and love, is "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." Give the gospel to the Sabbath, and the gospel will save the Sabbath. We lose time, we waste energy, and corrupt our faith, when we attempt to accomplish religious good by any other method.

THIRDLY: *Wise diligence in setting a proper example of honor to the Sabbath-day.*

Our faithful manifestation of regard for its holy purposes and edifying privileges will do more than mere words to compel for it the respect of our fellow-men. It is the example of Christians which is their light in the world, the heaven which, by the grace of God, is to leaven the whole mass. But let it be a proper example of the Sabbath, — proper to its character, its commemorations, and its revelations of hope. It is the day which the Lord hath made, that we may rejoice and be glad in it. It is essentially a festival. Even on a fast-day, God, by his prophet, forbids us to hang down our head, like a bulrush, and by his Son commands us to wash our face and anoint our head: how much more on the Sabbath-day? As men are unnecessarily prejudiced against the gospel by a self-righteous asceticism, the very opposite of evangelical liberty, so are they repelled from the Sabbath by a pragmatical gloom and severity. Be it our care to show men that we hold the Sabbath to be “a delight”; and that when the Lord lifts upon us, with its sacred morning, “the light of his countenance,” “there is gladness in our hearts more than” in theirs “when their corn and their wine abound.” It is the day of communion with God, when heaven is opened that we may see Jesus at the right hand of his Father; therefore should our faces shine as those of happy angels. It is the day on which the grace of the Spirit flows down from the head of our High Priest over all his church; therefore should all her garments be fragrant with the name of Jesus. It is the foretaste of eternal joy; therefore should we look up, the happiest of the happy.

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‡ A Holland Translation.

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- (As this was probably the first American contribution to the literature of the Catechism, the title is given entire. The title-page bears no date; but at the end of a short introduction to the work occurs the following: —
- “*Aldus gegeven in Nieuw-York den 24. April 1706.*
- V. ANTONIDES,
Eccl. in Midwoud, &c.
- HENRICUS BEYS,
V. D. M. in Kingstowne.”)
- Bouck* (Engelb. Franc. de). *Explicatio Catecheseos Heidelbergensis*. Hag. 1741. 4to.
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- Bouma* (Gellius de). *Catechesis Religionis Reformatae Analysis illustrata*. Zutph. 1651. 8vo.
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- Breukland* (Jac.). *Verhandeling van de Leer des Genade-Verbonds na den draad des Heidelbergischen Catechismus*. Midd. 1711. 8vo.
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- Crucius* (Jac.). Treasure of the Christian Soul. 54 Sermons on the Catechism. Amst. 1671. 4to.
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- Driessen* (Ant.). Ad Catechesin Heidelbergensem methodice et apodictice dilucidandam Manuductio. Gron. 1724. 4to.
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- (Van Alpen pronounces it the most valuable work on the Catechism.)
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Ursini (Zach.). *Corpus Doctrinae Christianae ecclesiarum a Papatu reformatarum, continens Explicationes Catecheticas, post varias editiones varie depravatas denuo recognitum ac restitutum studio Davidis Parei*.

(This work was not prepared for the press by Ursinus himself, but originally by some of his pupils, from notes, taken by them, of his lectures. The first edition seems to have been published at Leyden in 1584, and was followed by several others. They abounded in errors and discrepancies; and hence Pareus, at the request of many by whom he was judged to be peculiarly fitted for the task, carefully revised the whole work and caused it to be published, with the title given above, at Heidelberg in 1591. Several other editions appeared subsequently. The two immediately following are titles of English translations.)

Ursini (Zach.). *The Summe of Christian Religion, delivered by Zacharias Ursinus in his Lectures upon the Catechisme*. Translated into English first by *D. Henrie Parrie*. Lond. 1617; 4to. Lond. 1645; fol.

Ursini (Zach.). *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*. Translated by *Rev. G. W. Williard*. Columbus, (Ohio,) 1852. 8vo.

Ursini (Zach.). *Schatboek der verklaringen over den Nederlandschen Catechismus, verligt met Tafelen van Festus Hommius, en met toeeygeningen verrykt door Joh. Spiliardus*. Amst. 1657. 4to. Published without Spiliardus. Leid. 1617.

Ursini (Zach.). *Enchiridion Catecheticum ex Ursini praelectionibus excerptum*. Amberg, 1596. 8vo.

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Ursini (Zach.). *Ad Theologorum quorundam de Catechesi Palatina Censuram Responsio*. Opp. Tom. II. Heid. 1612.

Ursini (Zach.). *Verantwortung wieder die ungegründeten Auflagen und Verkehrungen mit welchen der Catechismus Christ-*

licher Lehre, zu Heidelberg 1563 ausgangen, von etlichen unbilliger Weise beschwert ist. 1564.

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Widder (Joh. Phil.). *Betrachtungen über die in dem Heidelbergischen Catechismo enthaltene göttliche Wahrheiten*. Francf. 1753. 4to.

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Witte (Petr. de). *Catechizing upon the Heidelbergh Catechisme*. Translated for the English Reformed Congregation in Amsterdam. Amst. (1660?) 8vo.

Wyss (Fel.). *Analysis Catechismi*. Han. 1653. 8vo.



